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Monrovia Style:

Presents THE PHILOSOPHER

Topher Delaney's ground-breaking career as an environmental artist has encompassed a wide breadth of projects from private residences to sanctuary gardens. Through the cultural interpretation of the landscape, her practice, SEAM Studio, has evolved traditional garden architecture into an exploration of cultural, social, and artistic narratives.

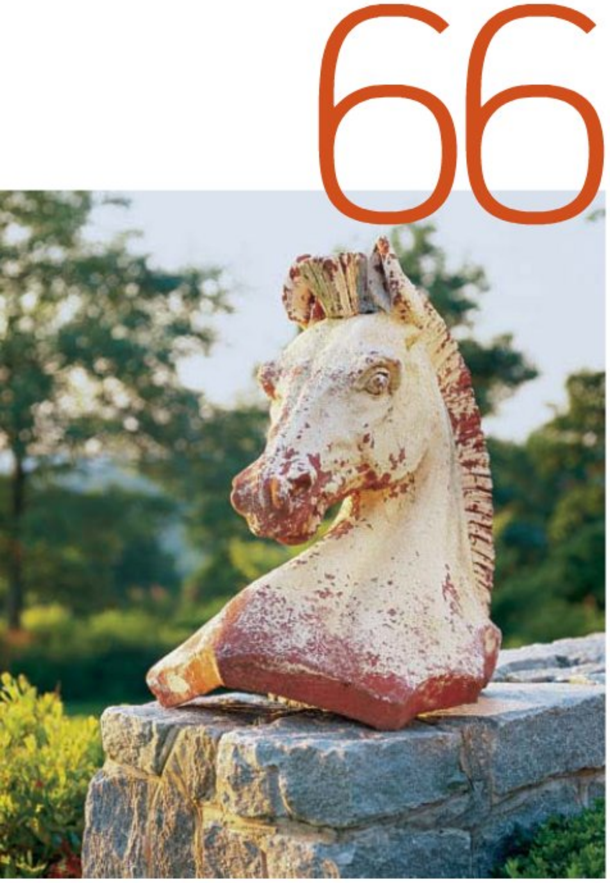


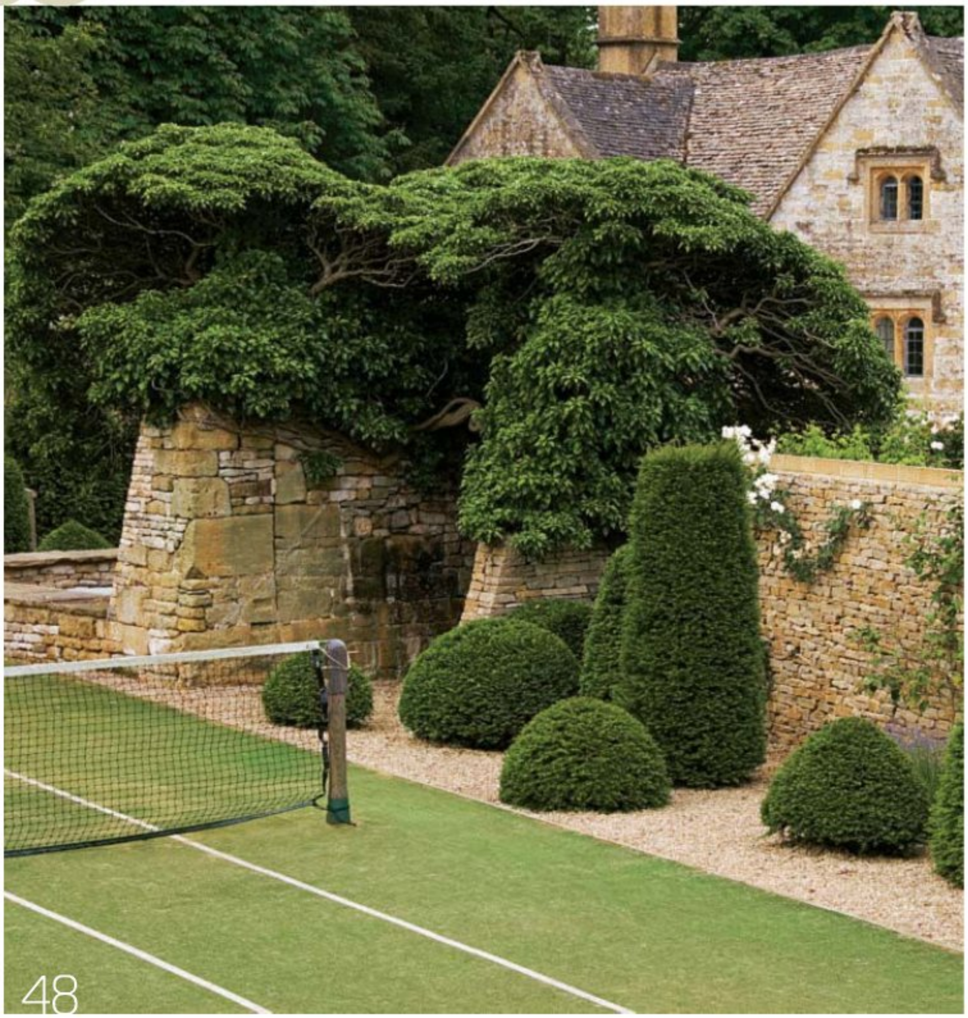
"I am inspired by Monrovia's vast community of available plants, consistent new introductions, and comprehensive educational support. All of this allows me to create combinations of texture, color and scale that result in gardens of excellence."

–Topher Delaney

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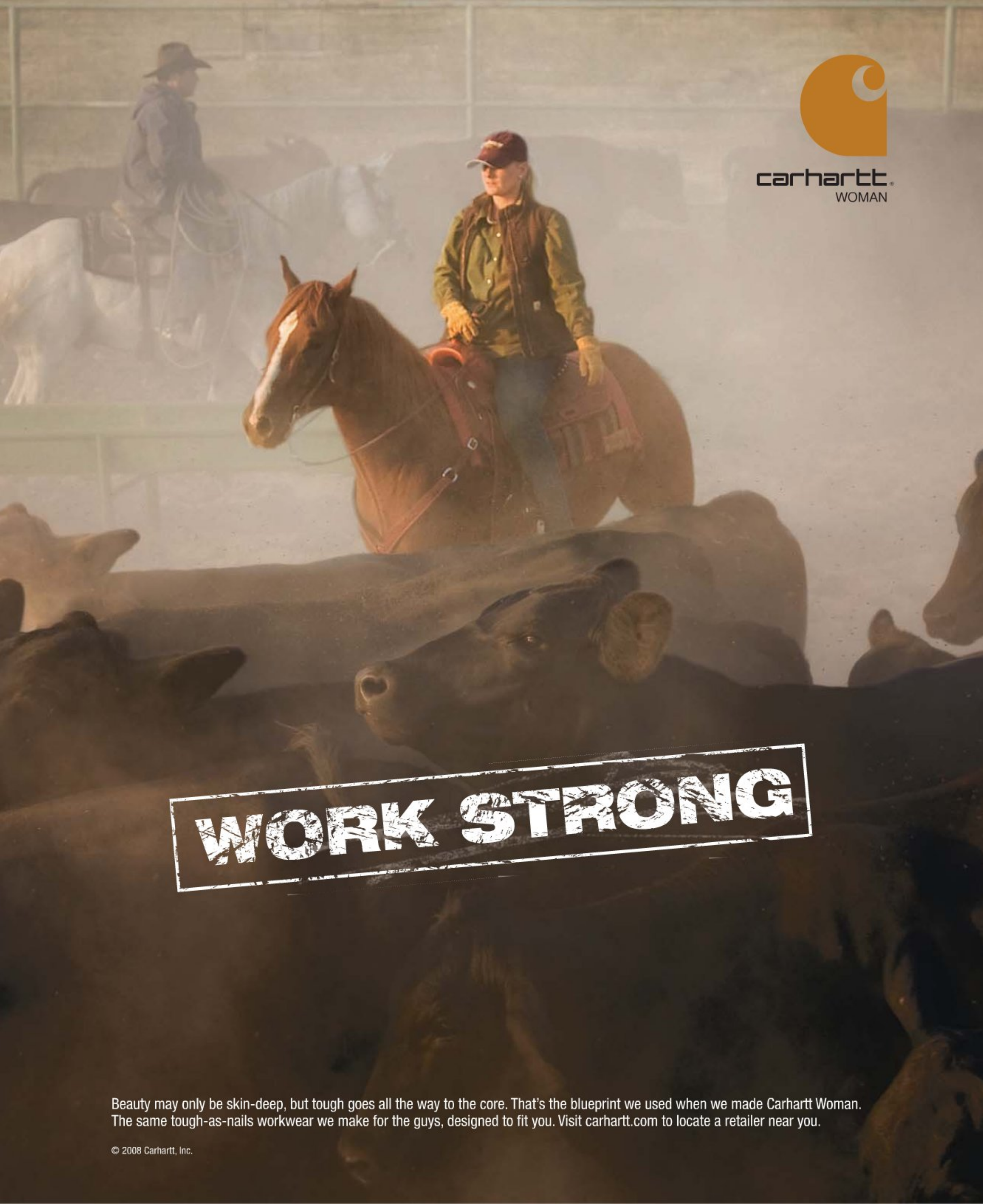
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: RICHARD FELBER, NICOLA BROWNE, DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON

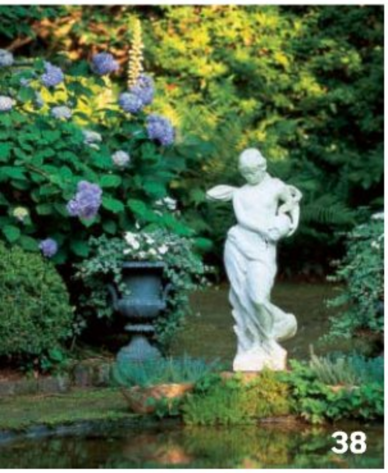


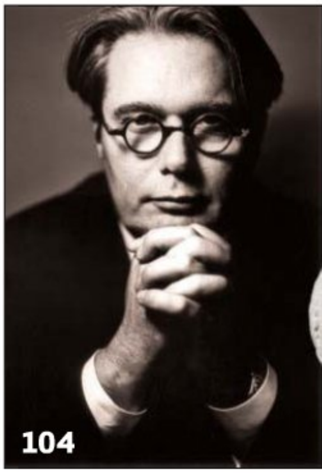
On the cover: The Whaley garden in Charleston, South Carolina, has been an eye-catcher since it was designed in the 1940s. Now in the hands of a new generation, there's plenty of room for outdoor entertaining and lots to see during the Charleston Foundation's annual Glorious Garden Tour. For more on the story, see page 38. Photograph by Roger Foley.



Features

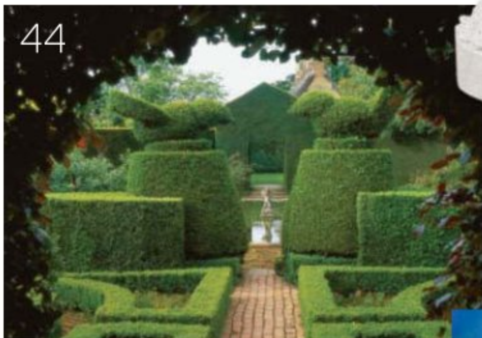

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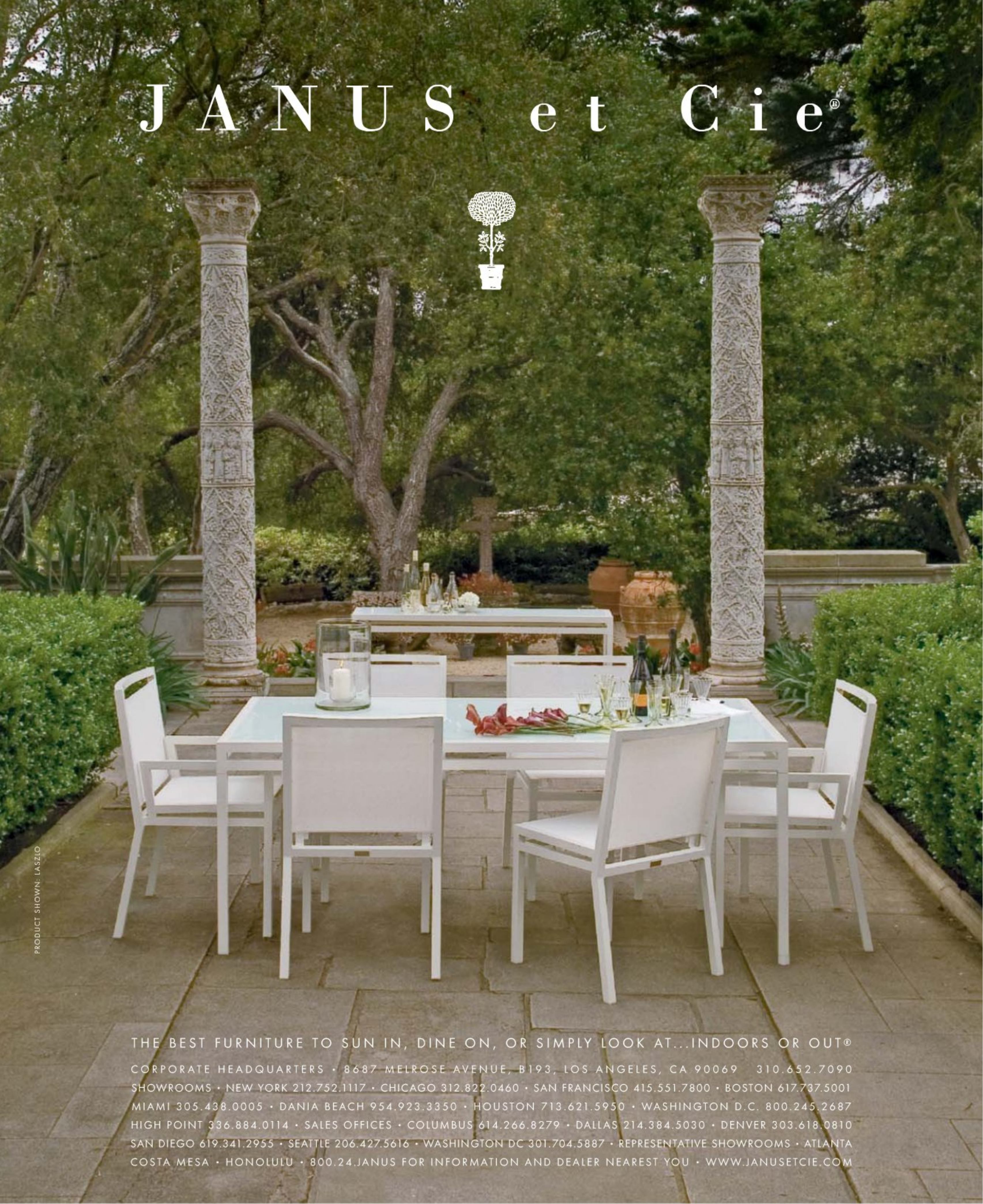


Departments

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ROGER FOLEY, COURTESY VANDERBYL DESIGN; CHARLES JOHNSON, ROB CARDILLO, COURTESY JANUS ET CIE, JERRY HARPUR

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The Pleasure Principle

I HAVE A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT FRIEND WHO GOES TO ENGLAND, FRANCE AND ITALY every year to get a close look at iconic landscapes. He imports his findings back home to America, where his very chic clients enjoy the exotic layouts, finishes and detailing that ooze international glamour. They display — not so discreetly — the success of the globetrotters who possess these pristine edens.

Such gardens remind me of turn-of-the-century country estates — but on a slightly smaller scale. Back in the day, a tycoon's vast wealth meant that he could collect ideas from around the world and bring them to life on his property in the form of limitless, luxurious collections of classic beauty.

Maywood, a Connecticut estate featured in this issue, reminds me of Golden Age gardens, equally grand but with a twist. Created gradually over more than a decade, it caters to the contemporary desire for elegant outdoor living and is not only meant to be viewed but to be experienced in all its fullness: swimming, harvesting edibles, dining and entertaining.

Wendy Owen's California acres also breathe travel, collecting and worldliness. An award-winning interior designer, Owen has carved out a slice of Provence with her fragrant fields of lavender, rocks brought home from everywhere and impeccably decorated outdoor living rooms.

Recently restored, Beatrix Jones Farrand's early 20th century gardens at the Harkness mansion resonate with an aching *je ne sais quoi* . The Oriental and Italianate gardens there echo the bliss of a faraway paradise.

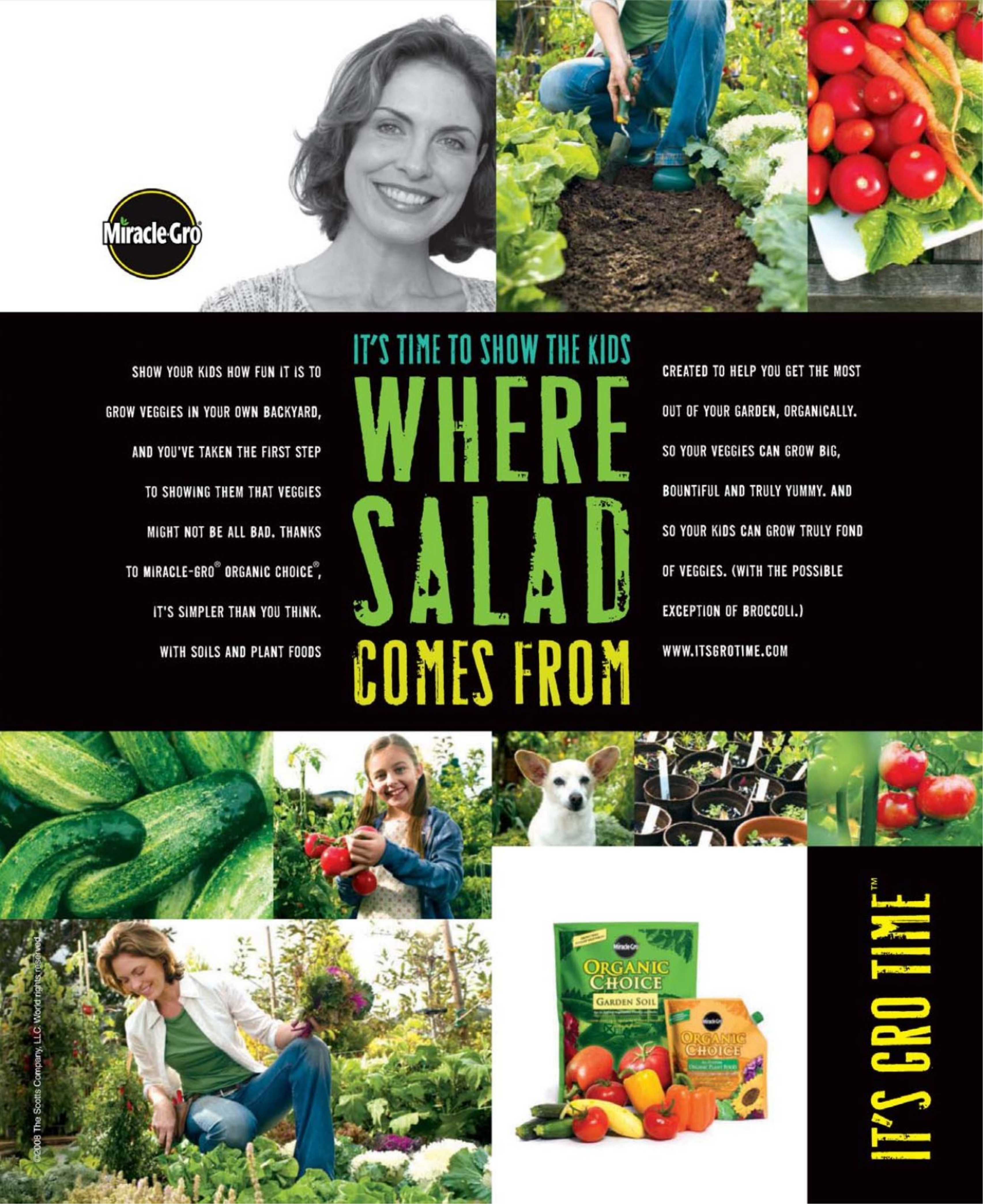
The uses of gardens were somewhat different 100 years ago — we don't do too much "strolling" these days unless we're acting on the set of a romantic comedy — but the spirit was the same: American gardens were and are still animated by the pleasure principle, not so much outward appearances.

— **SARAH KINBAR,** EXECUTIVE EDITOR



At the Maywood Estate, the swimming pool reflects the Housatonic River Valley landscape and hugs the hillside. A vine-covered cabana provides open-air shelter for al fresco dining — altogether a lush outdoor retreat for family and friends.

RICHARD FELBER


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SENIOR ADVERTISING MANAGER	Meshele Conley, 407-571-4616; meshele.conley@bonniercorp.com
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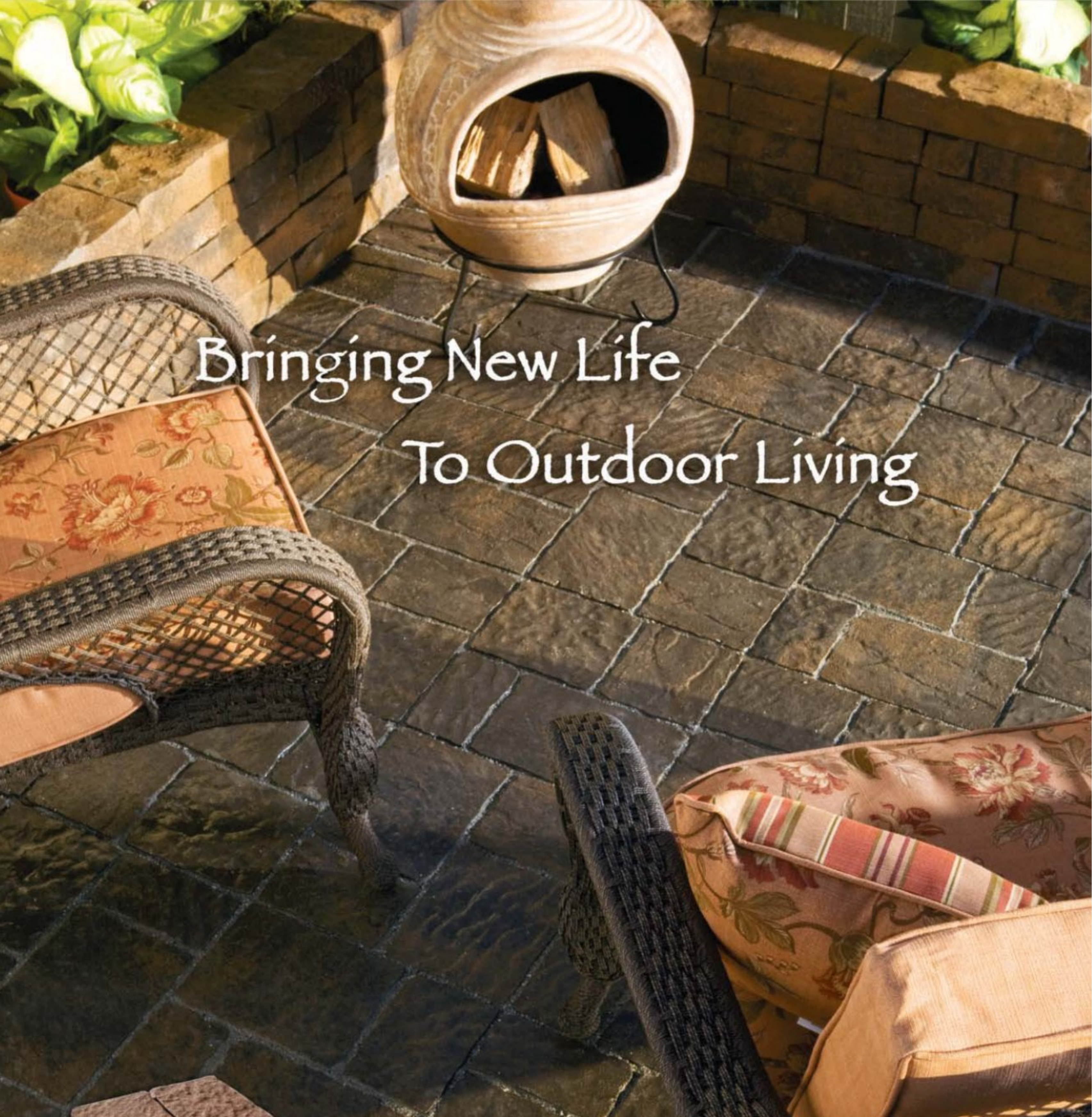
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Bringing New Life
To Outdoor Living




1

backyards spa style

With water an integral part of garden design, Sundance® Spas hot tubs are capturing center stage in the backyard.

THE MODERN SPA IS FINDING A NEW HOME IN THE HEART OF THE GARDEN. For outdoor decorators who delight in the sensory allure of moving water in a landscape, a spa is a natural addition. The visual impact of water is undeniable – a spa reflecting sunlight in a leafy alcove; a sparkling hot tub surrounded by blooming plants. The mist rising from the warm water of a hot tub is an invitation to enjoy the relaxing, therapeutic benefits of a hydromassage. And now, with Sundance Spas offering features like lighted waterfalls, and more options in coordinating spa accessories, it's easier than ever to integrate the beauty of moving water into your backyard environment.

Spas come in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and colors. As a first step, measure the space where you envision your spa, and imagine the overall look and feel for the area. A portable spa can be partially sunken into a stone, wood or brick deck for a customized look. Tuck your spa into a secluded corner, or set it up on a patio with coordinating bars and stools for entertaining. Gazebos and screens from Backyards by Sundance provide shelter from the elements, a place to hang seasonal plants, and the privacy of an "outdoor room."

1 In an area large enough for entertaining, this corner location also offers privacy.

2 An in-ground spa becomes a garden oasis.

3 A wide, stone stairway showcases this Sundance hot tub, and makes it easy to access the verdant, secluded location.

4 A matching gazebo creates an outdoor-room effect.

5 Flowering plants, hedges and trees form a natural spa retreat.

6 You can add matching steps, surrounds, stools, and other accessories to any Sundance Spas hot tub.


2


3



A waterfall, backlit with color on a starry night, adds an element of drama. The AquaTerrace™ and AquaSheer™ waterfalls in hot tubs by Sundance Spas operate independently of the spa's jets, so you can enjoy the sight and sound of cascading water even when you're not using the hot tub.

Keep in mind that a portable Sundance hot tub is quite simple to set up. More importantly, thanks to advanced water purification systems and an emphasis on energy-saving features, a Sundance is easy to care for, with minimal operating costs.

Whether it's the focal point of a landscape, or a subtle way to integrate the beauty of moving water into the environment, a portable spa will add style, and livability, to your backyard.





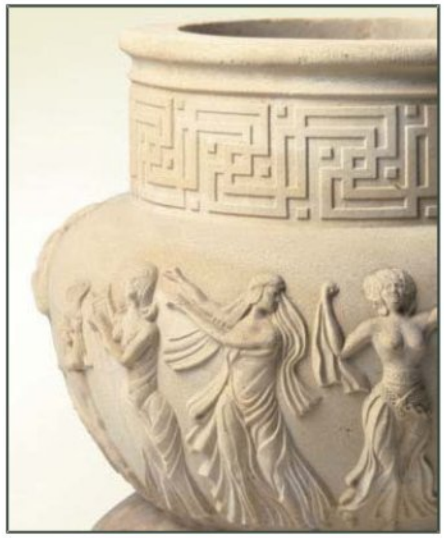




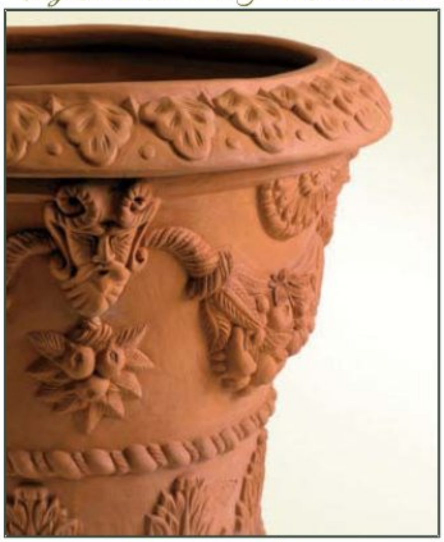
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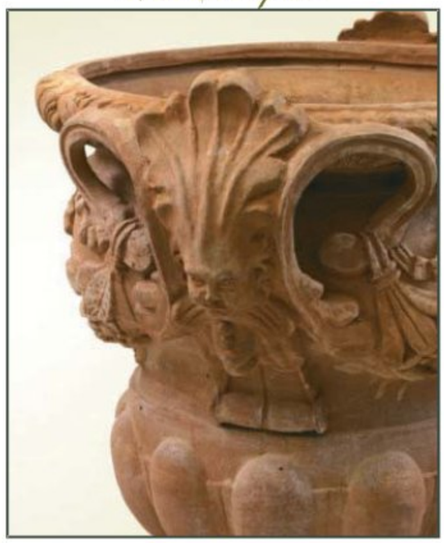


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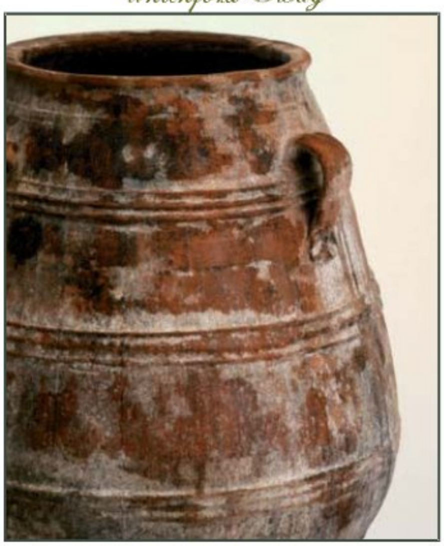
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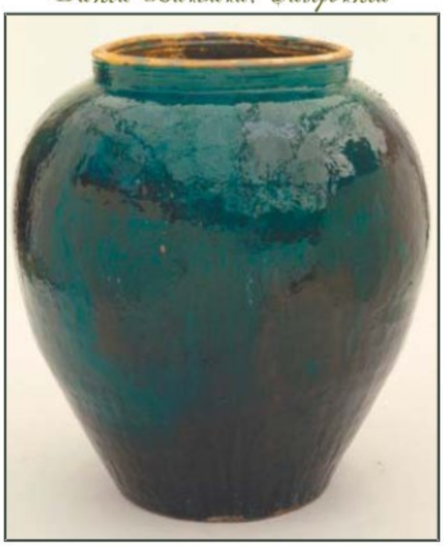
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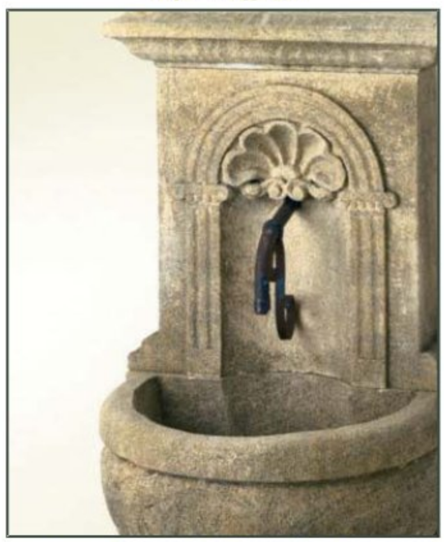
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Fine Home and Garden Products from Around the World



The Donatello Lion Mask fountain is taken from Marzocco's 1418 symbol of Florence. Ready to install, 20 inches high, from Garden Traditions. Photographed in Barbara Israel's garden in Katonah, New York.

Tradition Replicated

The esteemed authority and dealer Barbara Israel offers a new range of meticulous replicas of her rarefied antique garden sculpture collection. »

BEN COHEN







From top left: The koji lions that launched a career, now replicated; Greenway birdbath; Somerset and Dorset Maidens, originals c. 1880; 54-inch-long Hawthorne Bench, reproduced from a 1915 American original.



Barbara Israel recalls a childhood adventure in the forest property at her family home in rural New Jersey. There she discovered a stone footbridge that led to an overgrown turn-of-the-century Japanese garden. The 10-year-old girl unearthed a toppled pair of koji lions, like relics in an archaeological dig. Her mother later hauled the sculptures to the house, where the righted, spruced-up lions stood sentry for decades. It was the beginning of a lifelong fascination for the woman who would literally write the book on the subject, *Antique Garden Ornament: Two Centuries of American Taste* (Abrams, 1999).

Today, "antique garden ornaments have become fairly dear," says Israel — an understatement when a mere sundial can be a $50,000 investment. And so the Manhattan-based dealer has developed a subsidiary business, Garden Traditions, to offer a curated range of replicas of her antiques. Made in a New Paltz, New York, artisanal workshop, which also produces bespoke architectural ornaments and trims, Israel's replicas are cast in silicone molds, utilizing a composite material that is essentially crushed stone suspended in cement. The sculptures come in two colors: a light tan and a warmer, slightly darker grayish one that better suits the Asian-style pieces.

Her own children grown, Israel spends weekends in a three-story 1830 clapboard farmhouse on a hilltop in Katonah, New York. A stroll in her gardens is a haunting, surreal scene. Among the hemlock, spruce, Japanese cedar, pines, honey locust and katsura trees, dozens of animals, figures and ceremonial objects stand like characters in a pause-button dreamscape. Israel's outdoor world is inhabited by lifelike lions, retrievers, rabbits and maidens; putti — those little naked cherubs — by the dozen; seven-foot-tall urns, fountains and a well cap circled by birds and vines — all frozen in time and rendered in stone, lead, cast iron or terra cotta.

And among the antiques are prototypes of the new replicas. A pair of koji lions — yes, exact reproductions of the ones the little girl once unearthed — memorialize a life of fascination with the garden ornament. — **TIMOTHY JACK WARD**

TOP TO BOTTOM: CHARLES JOHNSON (2), BEN COHEN, TODD SHAPERA


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cutting edge

elegance above

Inspired by the simple beauty of the wild reed mace marshes near Bangkok, Thailand's premier floral designer, Sakul Intakul, charms a freefall river of reed leaves into a drifting, swaying floral chandelier. Clean lines, rhythm and repetition carry his creative signature while the elegant, pure-white calla lilies evoke a perfect floral note.

—**ISABEL GILBERT PALMER**

SAKUL INTAKUL STUDIO



new work

Moss in Wonderland

WHEN THE 52-STORY NEW YORK TIMES TOWER OPENED this past November, that paper's architecture critic hardly spoke about the atrium, leaving one with the impression that all the unnamed landscape architect had to do was sprinkle some fairy dust and add water.

That atrium is the genius of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, Canada's foremost landscape architect, who in her work makes it look so very simple. Employing only seven birch trees and 6,000 square feet of native mosses, and segmenting the space with a razor-crisp wooden walkway that seems to float, Oberlander created what she calls a "wonderland."

Though I'd seen the atrium briefly when the building was unveiled, it wasn't until a cold January afternoon that I had the chance for a more intimate look. While waiting to have lunch with a friend, I peered beyond the Creamsicle-colored walls that framed a majestic group of birch trees.

Upon closer inspection, I noticed a simple, irregular grouping of paper birches (*Betula papyrifera*) emerging from gently rolling mounds that I later learned was the result of extensive microclimate studies. Who would have thought that these lacey, delicate trees were planted only last October, each one weighing 32,000 pounds? (The trees were found six years ago by architect Hank White, a collaborator on the project.) Critical to their success, their great height of 45 feet allowed them to reach the light.

On the ground plane were the mosses, arranged in broad, sweeping, abstract shapes, inspired by the artist Jean Arp. Here Oberlander determined that the two native species — common haircap moss (*Polytrichum commune*) and fern moss (*Thuidium delicatulum*) — mingle together as they have in her garden in Victoria, B.C. Not only will they tolerate the shade, but in time they will achieve her desired effect of a shady northeastern woodland.

An ipe wood bridge has an alluring moodiness of its own — the wood turns from reddish-brown to soft gray as it ages. The bridge orients viewers as they see it from other parts of the building.

Oberlander intended for the atrium to have a therapeutic effect on those who experience it. It's working: Seated alongside tired newspaper people waiting for my lunch date, I felt renewed and refreshed. — **CHARLES A. BIRNBAUM**





Above: A view of the mossy courtyard from inside the New York Times Tower. Right: Paper birches 45 feet in height reach for the light, ensuring their survival in this dark spot.

NIC LEHOUX (2)













one to watch

Randy Thueme

FOR SAN FRANCISCO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT RANDY Thueme, the proof (and the fun) is in the process. Known for his sensitivity to site and sophisticated interplay of materials, Randy is one of that rare breed of designers who can seamlessly knit together artistry and pragmatism. — **JENNY ANDREWS**

Q: *What sort of project gets your adrenaline pumping?*

A: One where all the components speak well to each other — landscape, architecture, interior design, lighting, art. I enjoy the process as much as the final result, and creating something wonderful no matter what the limiting parameters might be.

Q: *Your recent project in Carmel Highlands near Monterey, California, certainly had its challenges.*

A: Yes, most of the property is taken up by the house, a cliff and a drainage ravine, leaving only three-quarters of an acre to work with. But it's a spectacular site. Our goal was to respect this dramatic slice of the coastline while providing a variety of spaces, maximizing its potential without overdoing it. Also, outdoor-living features should be attractive even when not in use, and here the spa pool was lined with Bisazza glass tiles in a pattern inspired by a rug the clients own. Even a doghouse needs to be thought about, if it's going to be seen.

Q: *Your work seems to show that it's been touched by a designer, but not with a heavy hand.*

A: It takes a lot of effort to look effortless. We push the boundaries at the beginning and then refine, refine, refine until we have something that is buildable and affordable, and that also maintains our original design intent.

Q: *What is your most out-of-the-ordinary project?*

A: There's one under construction now in Pacific Heights where we're installing a 10-foot-high, 30-foot-long wall of copper, woven from foot-wide perforated bands. We wanted to do something unusual, and it will be like adding another room to the house even on this very small lot.



For Randy Thueme (left), a challenging site speaks of opportunities. Here a cliffside location offered spectacular views and inspired a garden that appreciates the natural landscape while creating a diversity of outdoor living spaces. Above: Spa pool lined with glittering Bisazza tiles. Right: Gathering place with firepit and boulders for seating.



MATT MILLMAN (2), MARION BRENNER



Not your ordinary conservatory: A life-size statue of Nike, a cathedral-like roof, concrete planters and a trellis as only Frank Lloyd Wright could envision make this plant house in Buffalo, New York, like no other.

restoration

Wright Rebuilt

SCHEDULES, BUDGETS OR PLANS COULD NOT CONTAIN the imperious genius of Frank Lloyd Wright, who infamously left a wake of aggravated clients, vendors and family as he meticulously redefined American architecture — and inspired the protagonist Howard Roark in Ayn Rand's *Fountainhead.*

"Dear Sir," wrote Darwin D. Martin from Buffalo, New York, in a letter to Wright in September 1904. "I come to a realizing sense that you have not filled my order for one greenhouse, but instead have substituted a building which in a pinch will answer for a conservatory. We will have to build a greenhouse, that is a growing house, elsewhere on the premises or depend on outside resources," wrote the senior executive at the Larkin Soap Company, clearly at wits' end.

The missing greenhouse was for Martin's new family home, in a complex that originally included the two houses, a conservatory, pergola and carriage house — Wright's first of several commissions in Buffalo. Now the 2,655-square-foot conservatory that fueled the lively dispute between client and genius has been rebuilt to Wright's original specifications, as part of the thorough restoration of the Martin House Complex.

In his archived letters to Wright, Martin complained about 12-inch concrete piers in the greenhouse. "Nothing will grow satisfactorily within these piers," he wrote. "Every plant will grow with a wry neck toward the light." He worried that "it will bankrupt any soap man to buy flowers and plants to take care of all the flower vases and ground you have prepared for us. I foresaw the economical necessity of a greenhouse and that is what I wanted."

Wright eventually admitted that "conservatory" was the proper word for the brightly lit room he appointed with concrete planters and a replica statue of Nike of Samothrace, a signature embellishment. "You cannot grow everything," Wright conceded, "but you need never feel the lack of beautiful flowers and foliage." After he told Wright to find a spot for a true greenhouse, Martin warned him to "go mighty light on the architecture" this time.

Today the rebuilt conservatory is filled with tropical plants, making it possible to enjoy Wright's vision without quibbling over its function. And true to Martin's demands, a kit-built greenhouse stands at the back of the property, ready to furnish plants for the soon-to-be-restored landscape that Wright designed, down to the last phlox and lily. See darwinmartinhouse.org. — **AMY STEWART**

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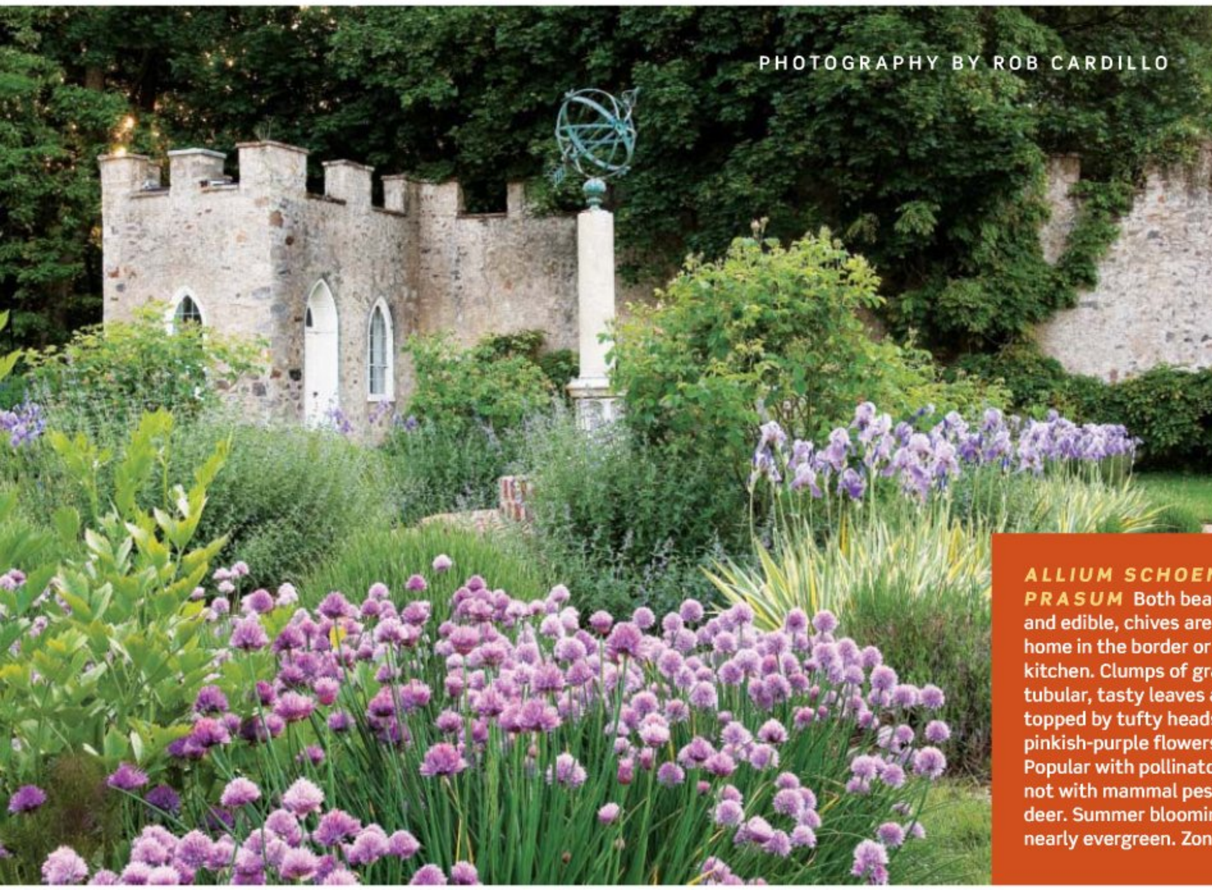

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Star Power

Stylish, long-lived and easy to grow, alliums are unbeatable bulbs for the perennial border

WITH NAMES LIKE 'GLADIATOR', 'GOLIATH' AND 'GLOBEMASTER', THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT the powerful punch alliums can pack. Also called ornamental onions, their sparkling flowers are arranged in symmetrical globes — egg, baseball or soccer-ball size — dramatically perched on leafless stalks, or in a delicate, pendulous clutch. While most alliums are purplish-pink, they also come in white-glove white (*Allium* 'Mount Everest'), cornflower blue (*A. caeruleum*) and butter yellow (*A. moly*). Close cousins to popular and pungent onions and garlic, they even deter deer. Ideal "connectors," alliums flower just as spring bloomers are winding down and continue until summer bloomers kick into gear. They also make chic pairings with a plethora of other perennials and even lend a touch of humor. —**JENNY ANDREWS**



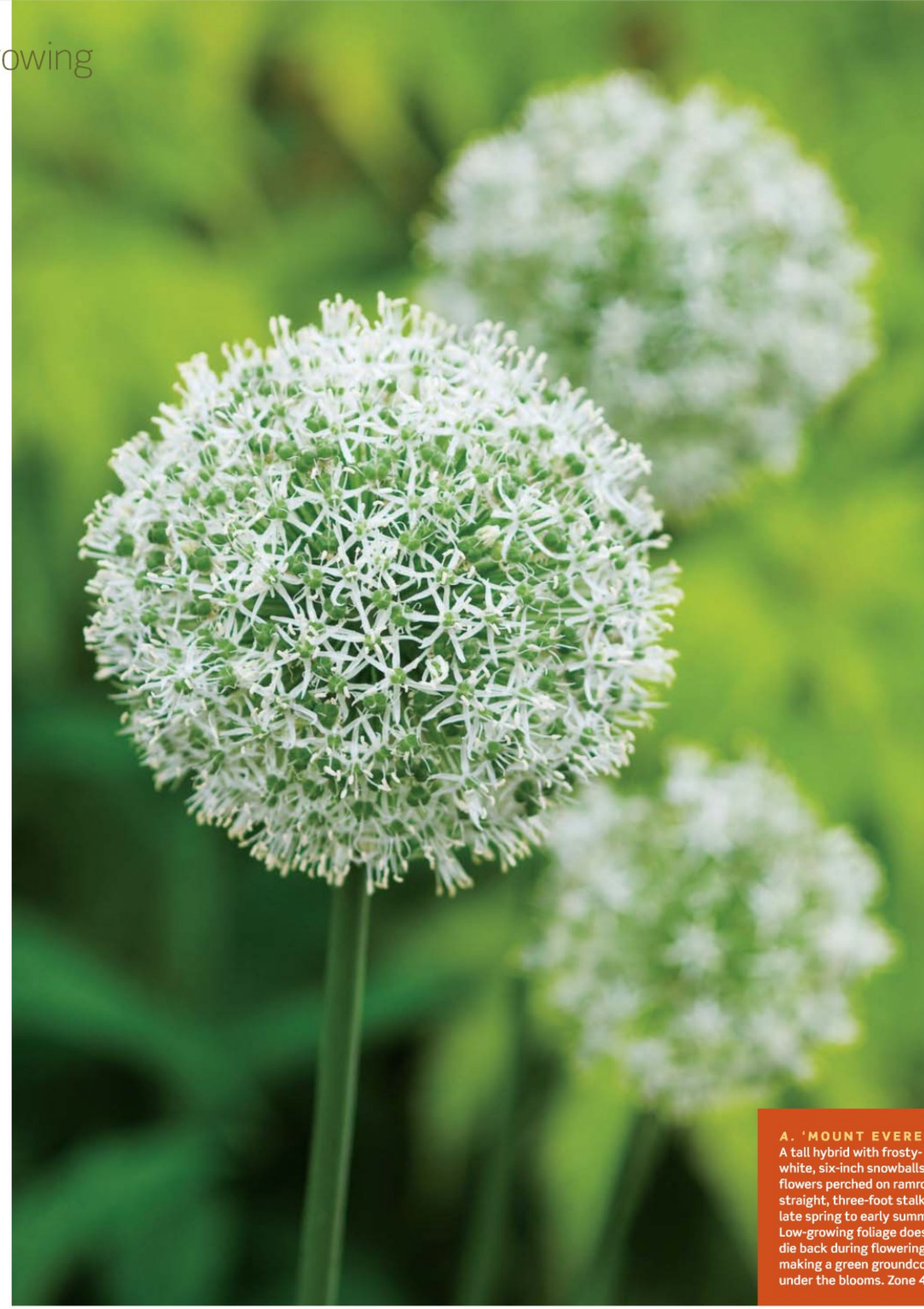
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROB CARDILLO

ALLIUM SCHOENOPRASUM **Both beautiful and edible, chives are at home in the border or the kitchen. Clumps of grassy, tubular, tasty leaves are topped by tufty heads of pinkish-purple flowers. Popular with pollinators, but not with mammal pests like deer. Summer blooming and nearly evergreen. Zone 5.**

Appeal: In alliums we find killer combinations of qualities — easy and gorgeous, elegant and playful, dainty and bold, at home in both meadows and formal borders. Perfect "tuck-ins," alliums play well with other plants, and are reliably perennial. With lots of colors, heights and sizes, there are alliums for every garden, small or large. They also make outstanding, long-lasting cut flowers.
Zones: Ornamental onions can be grown all across the United States, from hardiness zones as low as 3 to as high as 8, depending on the variety.
Exposure: Most alliums prefer full sun — even part shade will make them lean over, reaching for the light. But a few species, such as nodding onion, garlic chives and *Allium karataviense* can take a bit of shade.
Soil: Alliums are generally tolerant as to soil

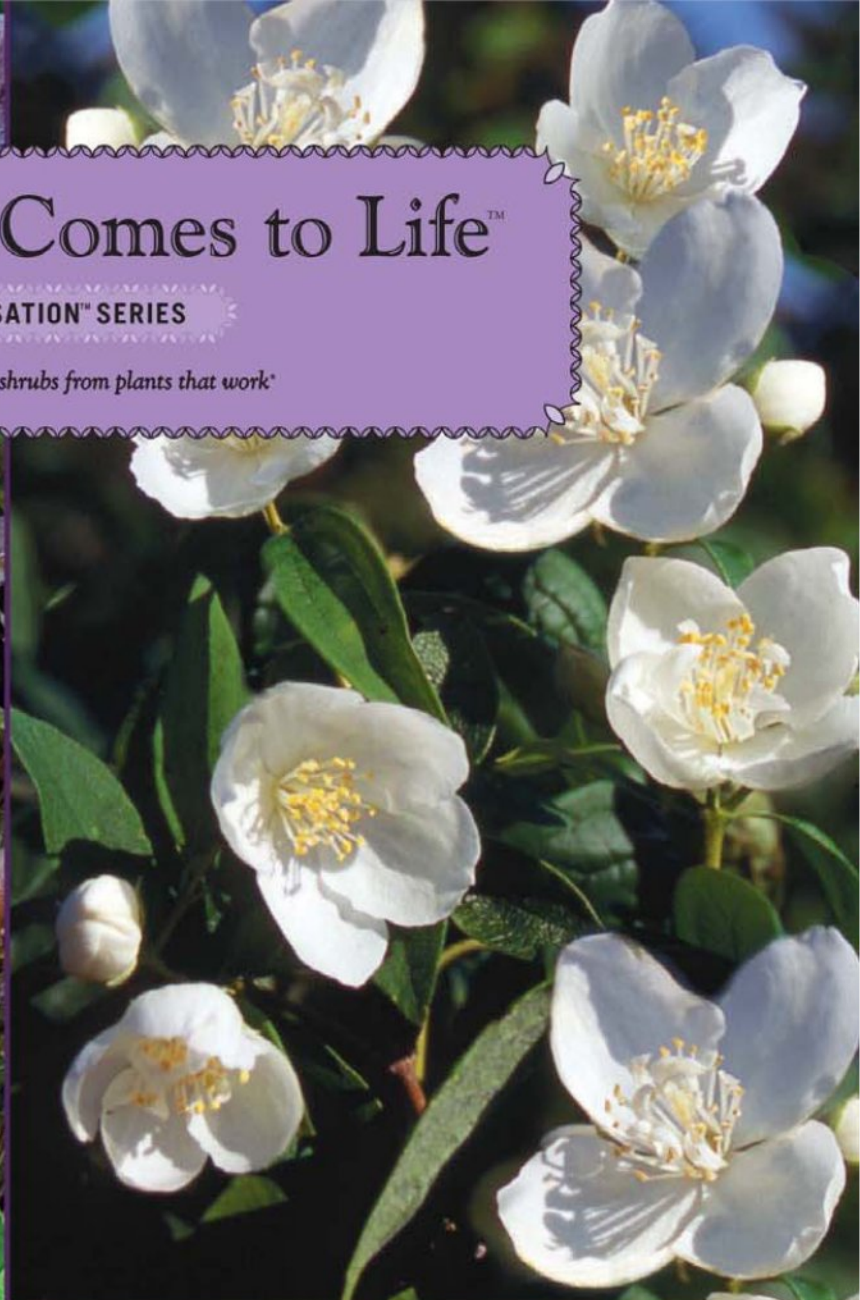


A. CRISTOPHII
Volleyball-size heads of silvery amethyst burst into bloom in summer on two-foot stalks — startling, sculptural and sparkling. Star of Persia adds drama when emerging through low-growing perennials. Flower heads dry well, like fireworks frozen in time. Zone 5.



A. 'MOUNT EVEREST'
A tall hybrid with frosty-white, six-inch snowballs of flowers perched on ramrod-straight, three-foot stalks in late spring to early summer. Low-growing foliage doesn't die back during flowering, making a green groundcover under the blooms. Zone 4.





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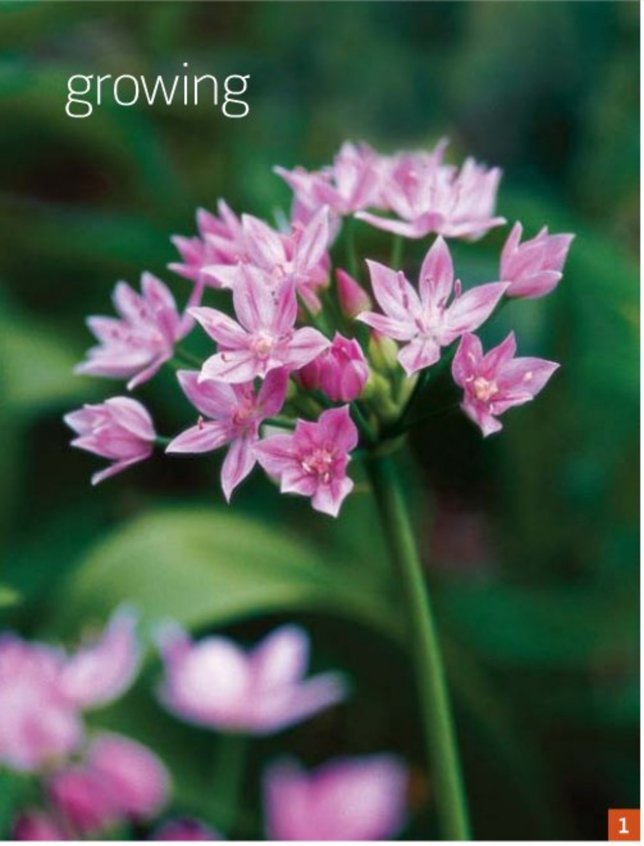
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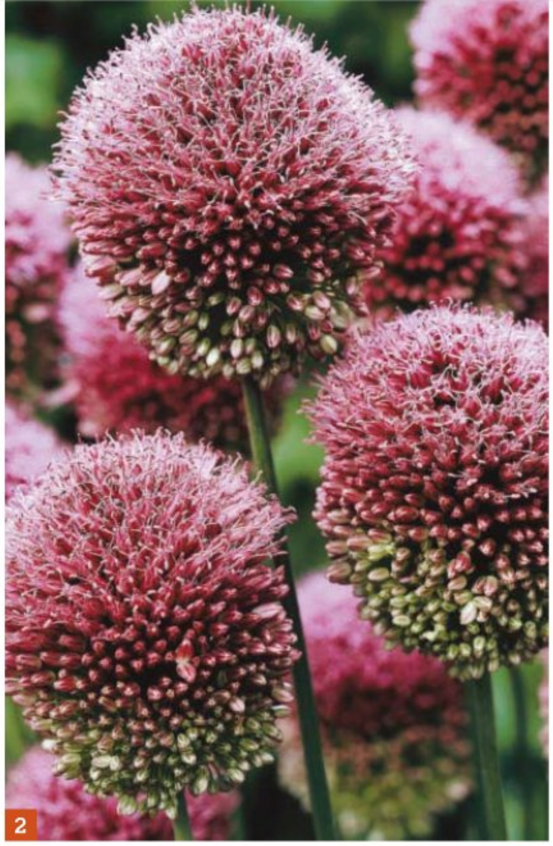
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Part Sun Part Shade | 5'-6' H | Zones 5-8
Moist, Well-drained Soil

NOVALIS®
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3



4

type. The important thing to remember with alliums, as with most bulbs, is to avoid wet locations, especially during their dormant period. A winter of cold and damp will lead to rotting and woe. Whether it's gravelly or loamy, soil absolutely must be well-drained for alliums to survive and thrive.

Care: Ornamental onions are one of the most carefree of perennials, virtually pest-free. The inherent compounds (sulfides) that make some species culinary favorites with humans ironically make all alliums distasteful to deer and other garden nibblers. Plant in the fall, twice as deep as the bulb is tall, with the pointy end up. Allow foliage to die back naturally; don't cut it off while still green since it feeds the bulbs and sets them up for a successful flower display the following year. To avoid seeing fading bulb foliage, plant alliums among perennials that require similar conditions.

[1] ***A. UNIFOLIUM*** West Coast native with loose, half-dollar-size clusters of lavender-pink flowers, blooming May to July on foot-tall stalks. Though misleadingly named one-leaf onion, each bulb produces two to three leaves. Found in the wild in grasslands that are damp during the spring, this allium is more moisture-tolerant than most. Be prepared for it to spread and naturalize. Zone 5.

[2] ***A. SPHAEROCEPHALON*** Claret-colored, golf-ball-size clusters of flowers, tightly packed and egg-shaped, nod and sway kinetically atop thin two- to three-foot stalks in late summer. Drumstick allium makes a good companion for shorter perennials, or as a see-through front-of-the-border plant. Zone 4.

[3] ***A. HOLLANDICUM* 'PURPLE SENSATION'** Hundreds of purplish flowers are packed into perfect baseball-size globes, blooming from late spring to early summer. A classic ornamental onion. Sturdy stems are two to three feet tall. Straplike leaves conveniently disappear as flowering begins. A great cut flower, it can last three weeks in a vase. Zone 4.

[4] ***A. CERNUUM*** Dainty nodding onion (sometimes called lady's leek) is a summer-blooming North American wildflower, native to dry open woods and meadows. The flower stalks, a foot tall or more, have a distinctive crook at the end, so the one- to two-inch umbels of pale pink or white flowers hang downward. Leaf blades are slender and flattened rather than tubular, forming a soft grassy clump. Zone 5.

TOP RIGHT: COURTESY JOHN SCHEEPERS



A. CAERULEUM **Brilliant azure blue, half-dollar-size flower heads perch on sturdy one- to two-foot stems — a rare color for alliums and great in combination with yellow and pink. Blooms in June and July. A native of Asia, blue globe onion is an heirloom bulb, introduced in 1830. Naturalizes in the garden in a welcome, not weedy, way. Zone 5.**

DESIGNING WITH ALLIUMS: ◻ Alliums make great "mixers" among other border plants, and many can be planted to come up through lower-growing perennials like *Nepeta* x *faassenii* and *Geranium sanguineum*, which also hide fading bulb foliage. ◻ Since alliums are perennial, they can be integral elements in a long-term design that gets better as it matures. The consistency of height and flower-cluster size in a single species make alliums a perfect plant for repetition in the garden. ◻ Ornamental onions offer a variety of heights, colors and bloom times, so you can sprinkle a lot of different types throughout the garden. They can also serve as bridge plants, helping the garden transition from spring into summer. ◻ The combination of long stems and spherical flower clusters, swaying and nodding in the breeze, adds three-dimensionality to the garden. Plant with sturdy architectural plants like *Phlomis* and tall sedums for textural counterpoint. ◻ Combine alliums with grasses such as fountain grass and herbs like lavender for a deer-resistant garden.

[1] AMBER WAVE A classic 2.5-inch-wide awning stripe is executed here in subtle variations of hue — wheat to a rich ochre. Offered by Nomi Fabrics, in Watsonville, California. Sold to designers. Call 831-728-4335 or see nomiinc.com.
[2] SOFT-SPOKEN Stripes can be used with gentle sophistication. Shown here (on sofa) is Perennials' Siena stripe in a Villa Napoli colorway that evokes Venice and subtly punctuates the room with color. Sold to designers. Call 888-322-4773 or see perennialsfabrics.com.
[3] EASTON'S EYE Known as America's top classicist designer, David Easton brings sophisticated, muted color to his outdoor fabrics collection for Lee Jofa. His Fenice Stripe has an aged, muted quality that evokes a grand country house. $176 per yard. Call 800-453-3563 or see leejofa.com.
[4] NEW SIMPLE In keeping with her restrained Chicago modernist style, Holly Hunt has introduced the Great Outdoors textile group, including a simple, modern half-inch stripe, shown here in Sandbar. Two yarn colors (sand and cream) in the stripe create visual depth. $62 per yard. Call 800-320-3145 or see hollyhunt.com.

1



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JON WHITTLE (3)

3

4



Dandy Stripers

Snap the towel, wave the flag — these new stripes are all about summertime fun

THIS SEASON, INNOVATIVE OUTDOOR TEXTILE DESIGNERS REINVIGORATE classic stripes. In the vocabulary of exterior design, nothing heralds summer and outdoor living quite like them. We associate stripes with jaunty athletics, things nautical, family celebrations. Seersucker, cabanas, picnics and polo shirts come to mind. For some serious but oddly engaging summertime reading for design buffs, try *The Devil's Cloth: A History of Stripes* by French medieval heraldry scholar Michel Pastoureau, who suggests that happy stripes are an enlightened recent development, from rather dark and dour medieval origins. Yikes. So our modern stripes have done a semiotic 180, thank goodness. SoHo-based Sina Pearson shows nuanced colors from nature and syncopated asymmetry in her Oasis stripe collection. Similarly, Giati Designs' Boardwalk pattern visually activates close-in-value colors with a vibrant, punchy hairline stripe. What's modern is the mix. Our advice: Choose a color family, then dress your garden furniture with stripes that complement rather than match. After all, a rich variety of patterns is as exuberant as the garden itself. — **TIMOTHY JACK WARD**





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[5] UPBEAT Sina Pearson studied textile design at Cranbrook, worked with minimalist Ward Bennett and is known for superbly nuanced colors. Her satin-sheen Pergola stripe is symmetrical; the Courtyard stripe is "syncopated"; and all work together. To the trade; $122 per yard. Call 212-366-1146 or see sinapearson.com.

[6] LEAN GREEN At JANUS et Cie, there is an extensive range of outdoor-indoor fabrics — ticking, textures or stripes — color-coordinated with herringbones, chenilles and jacquards. Pillow: Summerstripe in Apple, $131 yard. Call 800-245-2687 or see janusetcie.com.

[7] SATIN SHEEN Woven in Italy, Chella's Satin Ribbon Stripe has a taffetalike fashion sensibility. Broad 3.5-inch-wide stripes pair similar colors, and the fabric has a polished sheen that resembles, well, satin ribbon. To the trade; $128 per yard. Call 805-560-8400 or see chellatextiles.com.

[8] AQUA POP Giati Designs' Summerland collection, designed by Glenn Peckman, includes Boardwalk, shown in olive. The 3.75-inch repeat cabana stripe has a hairline of aquamarine and emerald green, which activates the design and gives it depth. To the trade. Call 805-684-8349 or see giati.com.

JON WHITTLE (2)

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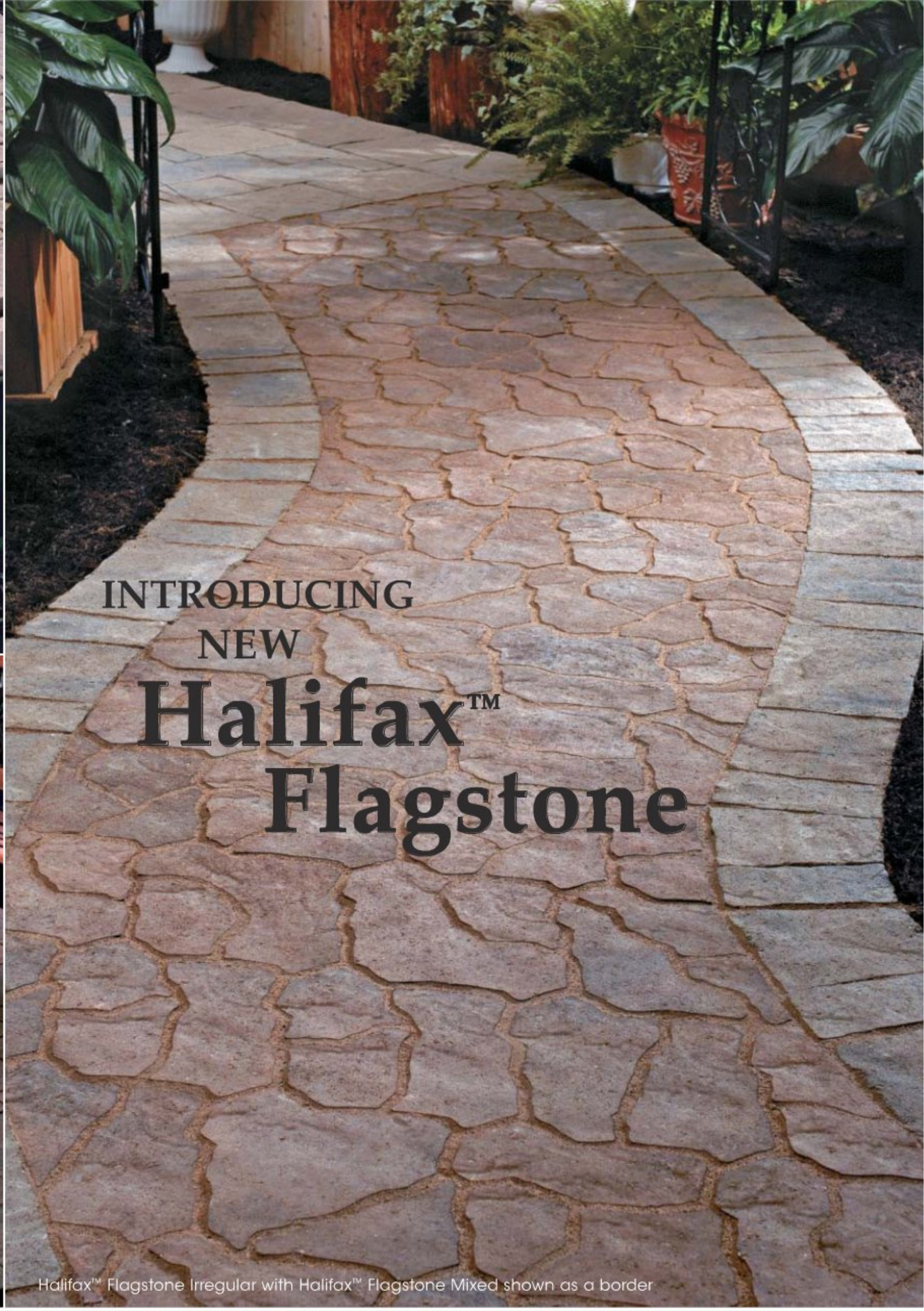
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In the vocabulary of exterior design, nothing heralds summer and outdoor living quite like jaunty, colorful stripes


Halifax™ Flagstone Mixed and 12″ x 12″


Halifax™ Flagstone Mixed and 12″ x 12″



Halifax™ Flagstone Irregular with Halifax™ Flagstone Mixed shown as a border

Southern Classic

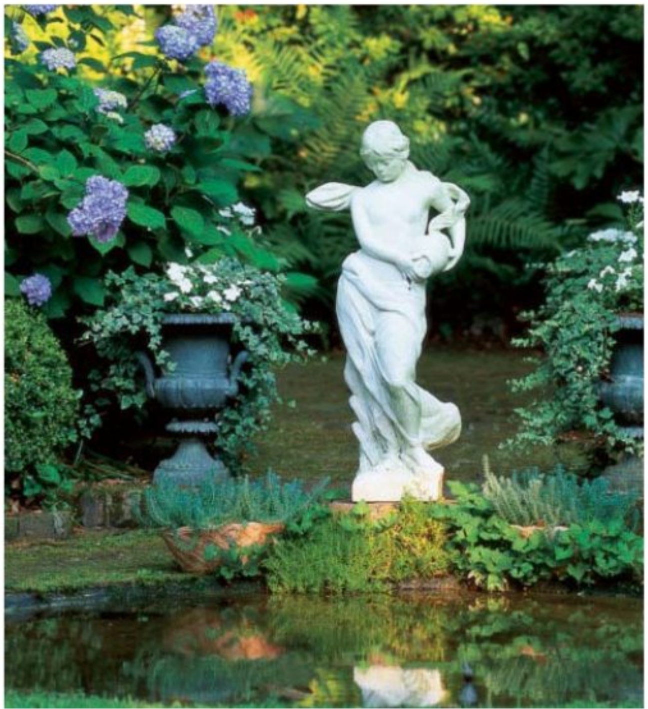
A newly updated garden gets party-ready in Charleston, South Carolina



BY DONNA DORIAN PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROGER FOLEY

Grecian urns and antique statuary underline the classical style of the Whaley garden in Charleston, South Carolina. "The garden is as simple as a haiku," says its current owner, Marty Whaley Adams Cornwell.

AFTER MARTY WHALEY ADAMS CORNWELL INherited her mother's 18th-century house and very famous garden in Charleston, South Carolina, it took her a long time before she could even start thinking about making it her own. The epitome of Charleston style, the garden was so well-loved — it had even been the subject of a best-seller her mother, Emily Whaley, had written — that Marty wasn't sure if she should change it at all. But eventually she returned to the original plan that Loutrel Briggs designed for her mother back in the 1940s. Briggs was a big name in Charleston in those days, and the dozens of gardens he designed there are still well known. Among them, Mrs. Whaley's was always said to be his favorite. Perfectly proportioned, with old-fashioned favorites in bloom almost throughout the year, there was always something easy and inviting about it that was integral to its classic good







SEEING

In her book, Mrs. Whaley writes about the construction of her one-inch-deep pond, which is easy to blow out and keep clean. Included in Loutrel Brigg's original plan, it has been much copied ever since it was designed in the early 1940s.

WALKING

Known for his flawless sense of scale and dimension, Loutrel Briggs sculpted three spaces within the rectangular lawn. This arrangement serves to break up the long, skinny lot and neatly subdivides the garden into separate rooms.

SITTING

The patterned backs of the classic Chippendale-like chairs add a decorative motif to the garden. Easy to move, they can act as "thrones" from which to view the garden or with a simple turn become extra seating at the table.

ENCLOSING

The scalloped fence on one side of the garden is echoed by white posts along the other. 'Nikko Blue' and 'Endless Summer' hydrangeas inter-planted with perennials and a new selection of annuals each spring sets the framework of the beds.



Anne and Betsy Catering prepared the Charleston classics of cheese biscuits, pimento cheese and tea for a party in the secret garden dressed for the occasion in lanterns and silver balls hanging from the tea olive trees.

looks. Now that Marty has made her mark on the place, there is plenty of room for outdoor entertaining, too.

LAYOUT: The Briggs design starts at the side entrance, where a wrought-iron gate opens to a shady outdoor hallway leading to a walled garden at the back of the house. Only 30 by 110 feet, it is organized around a rectangular lawn that gently undulates to create three separate garden spaces. More than halfway down the middle, a statue of a water nymph placed in front of a reflecting pool punctuates the entrance to a secret garden behind. When Marty redesigned the garden, she did away with the utility area adjacent to the house and created a much larger flagstone terrace alongside a tabby wall — making the garden, weather-permitting, a perfect place for parties almost year-round.

MATERIALS: To help better integrate the house and the garden, Marty used old copper pipes, which she turned verdigris with a good coat of vinegar, to build a fretwork lattice up the back wall of the house. A walkway made from old Charleston bricks follows the edge of the flower beds, which are backed by the tabby wall and a white scalloped fence.

STYLE: Classic Charleston — symmetrical, with a perfect sense of proportion and scale.

PLANTS: Although Briggs' layout has been left virtually intact, it allowed plenty of room for revision when it came to planting. Mrs. Whaley built the bones of the shaded back garden with boxwood, camellias, azaleas and pittosporum, while for the front gardens she chose a seasonal mix of sun-loving plants that included tulips, snapdragons and iris, followed by a run of alyssum, phlox, plumbago, blue salvia and nicotiana.

But when the garden became Marty's, she noticed that because her mother had worked every inch of it for years, it was definitely time for a good cleansing. After restructuring the front garden around old roses and



Wanting more space to allow for outdoor living and entertaining, Marty Cornwell designed the flagstone terrace, latticework and a second-story balcony to better integrate the house with her garden, all of which can be seen during the Glorious Garden Tours hosted annually by the Charleston Foundation.

hydrangeas and adding potted acanthus that sit on the brick terrace in the back, she planted a collection of vines — native wisteria, Chinese jasmine, clematis and passion vine — to climb up the lattice into the new balcony she built at the back of the house. Despite the age of the garden, and perhaps because of the effects of global warming, she also discovered that the old garden was still full of surprises: Taking a chance on a tropical brugmansia, she is still thrilled each year when its trumpeting apricot blossoms make it the showgirl of the garden.

FURNISHINGS: When Marty visited English garden writer Rosemary Verey, who often wrote about Mrs. Whaley's garden, she asked Verey's son to make her a set of cedar Chippendale-style chairs similar to those he had designed for his mother's garden. Today, the patterned lattice along the house echoes the design on the chair backs.

BONUS: In spring, when garden parties are in full swing, there is no better place to be in Charleston than the Whaley garden. The ultimate hostess, Marty loves to entertain. Whether she is giving a tea for a young bride-to-be or opening her gate for the Historic Charleston Foundation's annual spring tours, Marty knows that with a quick turn of her hand, she can set the tables with linens and plenty of food, and the garden, decorated with old Charleston favorites, will do all the rest.


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ROMANCE

Genius of Place

Restorations at Hidcote Manor's renowned gardens reveal the inspired brilliance of its designer

IN AN ISSUE DEDICATED TO THE THEME OF CLASSIC beauty, it would be an oversight not to include Hidcote Manor Garden in England. This is among the most influential gardens in the world and certainly one of the most visited. Each year more than 100,000 people come to this sequestered hilltop in the Cotswolds. No garden made in the 20th century has more clearly indicated the way forward for garden design — the contemporary style manual was practically written here, from "garden rooms" to "all-year interest" to "sense of surprise." This quintessence of Englishness is the work of a quiet American gentleman, Major Lawrence Johnston (1871-1958).

It is said that Johnston first came to England to play in an amateur tennis tournament and "lost his heart" to the country. From a wealthy Baltimore family, in his youth he traveled extensively throughout Europe with his mother, Gertrude Winthrop. Johnston took British nationality and fought in two wars on the British side before settling at Hidcote with his mother in 1907.

His patrician background gave Johnston access to the Edwardian gardening elite — the diaries of Norah Lindsay, Edith Wharton and Vita Sackville West are sprinkled with mention of visits to Hidcote. In his own lifetime, his contribution as a gardener and plant collector was recognized with the Royal Horticultural Society Veitch medal, its highest honor. But despite this, little is known of the man.

Today Hidcote is riding a wave that began in the 1980s, with the resurgence of an interest in gardening that puts plantsmanship on a pedestal, but in 1948 its fortunes were low. That was the year that Johnston handed over the garden to the National Trust and retired to Serre de la Madone, his winter retreat in the south of France, where he died 10 years later. Hidcote was the first garden taken on by the Trust, so its significance was well understood, but no legacy was provided for its continued upkeep. During the next few decades, with visitor numbers low and labor costs high, the giant slept.

Glyn Jones, the present-day head gardener says, "The structure of the garden was kept intact, but the horticulture drifted — the rock garden, the alpine garden ... the plant house went altogether." Although Hidcote was still a destination for those in the know, the dearth of plans and plant lists made it easier to accept the casual erosion of Johnston's vision. However, thanks to developments in the past decade, that state of affairs has been abruptly reversed. "About five to six years ago, one diary and three notebooks surfaced," says Jones. "They were sent anonymously in a brown envelope to the Trust. They covered the period 1928-32, the garden's heyday. We ended up with lists of hundreds of plants Johnston was growing or considering, plus notes on his friends and associates."

In September 2005 came even more exciting news: An anonymous donor made a gift of 1.6 million British pounds to Hidcote on the condition that the National Trust matched the sum. The aim was to restore the garden to its glorious 1930 peak. With this major work now well underway, a widely publicized centenary last year and several books on the garden in print (see below), Hidcote is at a new pinnacle of recognition. So, one might ask, why does Hidcote still stand as a model of the best a garden can offer?



Restored red borders at Hidcote Manor Garden exemplify the genius of Lawrence Johnston, its original creator.

JERRY HARPUR

IDEAS: It is rare not to take away at least one idea from Hidcote that stays in the mind forever. Certain images of the garden are so imprinted on the gardening collective memory that it's hard to accept they could all be from the same place: the theater garden, the gazebos, the red borders, the clipped peacocks, the "stilts" garden, the bathing pool garden. Although the overall scale is grand, individual components translate well into smaller spaces and get red-blooded gardeners fired up and resolved to be more ambitious at home.

SURPRISES: Johnston's quirky sense of scale, his willingness to experiment and his inventiveness are elusive qualities, but they're definitely there. In *The Education of a Gardener*, Russell Page's description of the bathing pool garden sums up the effect: "At one point we come through a yew arch into a tiny, square, hedged-in garden filled with so large a circular pool that there is barely room for the narrowest of paths between it and the hedge. The raised pool, perhaps 20 feet across, looks all the larger for being so compressed, and the unusual proportion of the whole breaks down for a moment, the mechanism of one's habitual criticisms and judgments. One is free to accept and feel this little scene as intensely real; the pool becomes like a sea, which reflects the sky and a floating leaf. A passing bumble bee and each chance-grown plant in crevices of the stone border seem to shine with a special clarity — time and space exchange their scale."

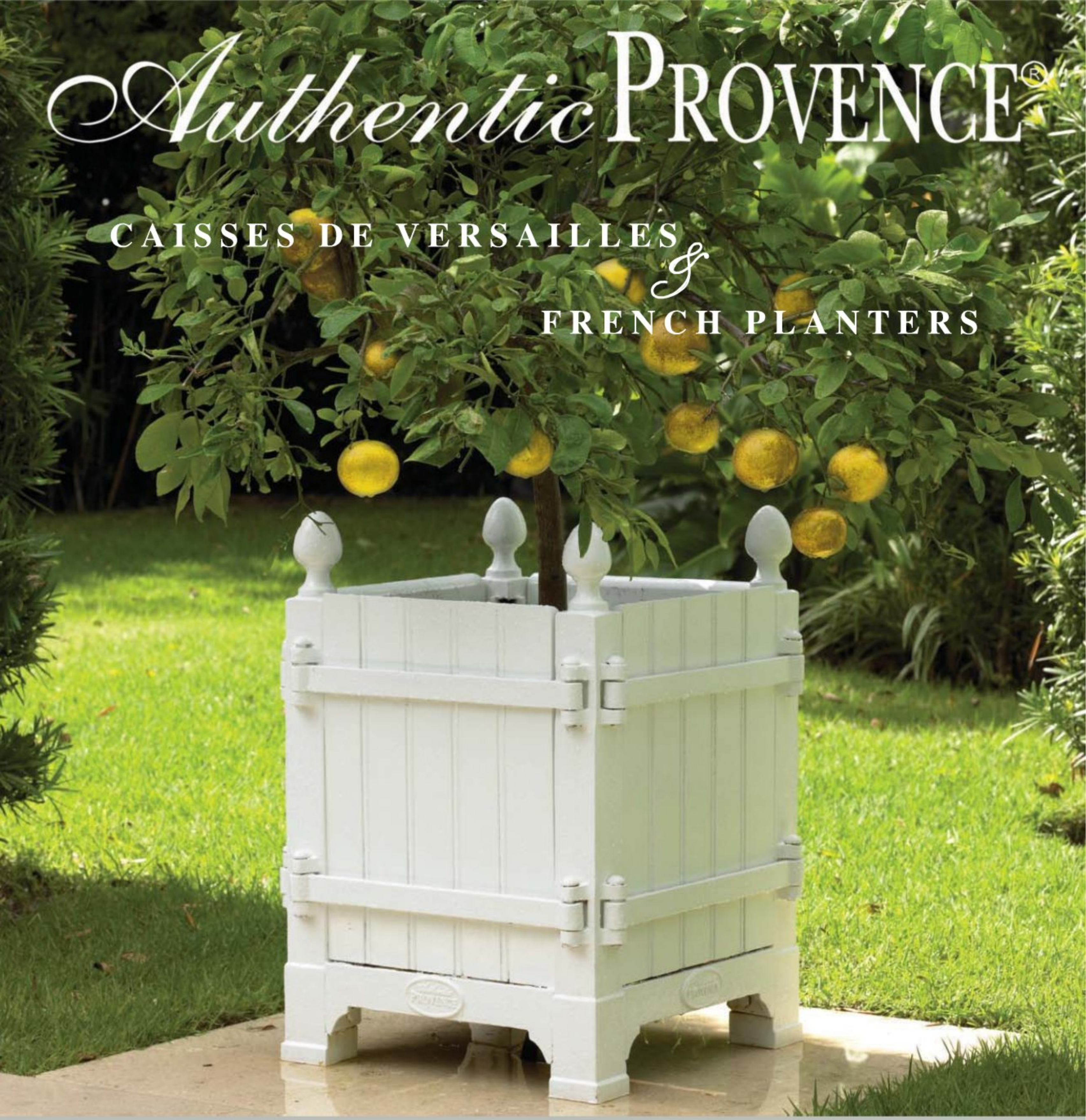
STRUCTURE: Johnston was a plant fanatic, but he achieved a garden that fascinates with its strong layout — long axes push out into the countryside; architectural hedges back huge borders; intimate garden rooms offer enclosure. He took on classical lessons seen in Italy and France and infused them with his own style, honed by immersion in the Arts and Crafts movement, with its emphasis on local materials and traditional motifs.

PLANTING: "Flamboyant diversity" is how Glyn Jones sums up Johnston's style. The allure of the new or unusual plant was central to Hidcote, but Johnston was ruthless at bending new acquisitions to his plan: He planted in a jungly style that gave no quarter to the weak. The delicate and rare were allocated special areas, but within borders plants had to be robust enough to compete with their neighbors. And the tiered regimentation of Gertrude Jekyll's borders was not his style, although he admired her work. Johnston pushed big plants to the front of borders, mixed types of plants and was more daring than any of his contemporaries in encouraging the anarchy of nature to show through.

Today the garden continues to evolve with new research and new investment leading the way. Appropriately enough, this year Jones is about to start the restoration of Johnston's beloved tennis court. The vast rock garden continues to take shape with reconstruction of the subalpine section using sub-shrubs and true alpines. Around the stream and *Primula* areas, Jones will be experimenting with several new varieties of *Meconopsis* (from specialist grower Ian Christie). In the Fern Dale, newly created based on Johnston's notes, new combinations of *Paeonia rockii* hybrids and a variety of ferns will be planted.

The tradition of excellence continues, with the Hidcote gardeners organizing plant-collecting trips that retrace Johnston's footsteps and using ideas from the finest nurseries worldwide. But best of all, the garden continues to be open to all and repays repeated visits. — **JOANNA FORTNAM**

For further information see nationaltrust.org.uk/hidcote. Books include Hidcote, the Making of a Garden *by Ethne Clarke (Michael Joseph);* The Garden at Hidcote *by Fred Whitsey (Frances Lincoln);* Hidcote: The Garden and Lawrence Johnston *by Graham Pearson (National Trust Books); and* Hidcote Manor Garden *by Anna Pavord (Tempus).*


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GARDEN DESIGN



RICHARD FELBER

MAY **1.** A Cotswolds estate for the Collins family is reimagined by landscape designer Jinny Blom, p. 48. **2.** Wendy Owen and her husband John Isbrandtsen have brought rocks, design ideas and happiness back from France for their California garden. *"Provence is our shared passion,"* says Owen, p. 56. **3.** A private residence and a working farm, the Maywood Estate is briefly open for tours. Go yourself or come with us, p. 66. **4.** *"There's a softer feeling to heirloom gardens, like seeing the scene through a gauzy lens,"* says Eileen Grant, head of the horticulture committee at the Harkness estate, p. 78.

MATCH POINT

History pairs up with contemporary taste for luxury in this garden of traditional English forms and innovative design

BY JOANNA FORTNAM. PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICOLA BROWNE





This ancient Cotswolds manor house was a sleeping beauty until the present owner got together with garden designer Jinny Blom and architect Ptolemy Dean to revive its fortunes. A view from the Granary Walk gives a sense of its lush, enclosed location in the Windrush Valley. The house now serves as a luxury weekend retreat.



It was sheep that first made the Cotswolds famous, and prosperous, in the 1400s. This middle-England region has been known ever since for very fine wool, so much so that its medieval houses of worship were known as "wool churches" — to acknowledge the source of construction funding, not to belittle the beliefs. The sheep, or more accurately their descendants, are still there to dot the rolling hills. But they now have famous and prosperous company.

Today parts of the achingly quaint Cotswolds have become the British version of the Hamptons, where the likes of Kates Winslet and Moss, Liz Hurley and Damien Hirst hole up for long weekends to "rough it" in rambling farmhouses, renovated to within an inch of their lives at the end of dirt roads; the local pubs have been taken over by London chefs who serve things with foam, alongside the endearingly named spotted dick and sticky toffee pudding. Many of the royals have property here too, including Prince Charles, who also operates a gourmet shop called Highgrove near his place.

Steven Collins, a London real-estate investor, was instantly smitten when he came upon the 15th-century Cotswolds manor house of Temple Guiting (pronounced Guy-ting) — a rare find indeed with all its ramshackle charms. Even by the history-drenched standards of the British, the home and grounds that Collins bought in 2001 has an aura of a different time, a stepping back into an ancient domain, with flowery gardens enclosed by stone walls. Situated on a river and cocooned in a sleepy valley in remote north Gloucestershire, Temple Guiting (it is the name of both the village and the house) is listed as a U.K. site having national or historical interest.

Right: Weathered stone walls of the house are smothered in a lipstick-colored rose (above) of unknown origin that came with the house. Below: The high walls of the tennis court, dry laid in local stone, won a craftsmanship award and create a sun trap for spectators; a group of sculpted yews lines the court's boundary.







The middle and lower terraces of the garden at Temple Guiting Manor have very different characters. At left, rows of pleached hornbeams, underplanted with a white herbaceous border, flank the long pool on the midlevel. In the foreground, a boxwood parterre and yew hedges are partitions in the compartmentalized design on the lowest terrace, closest to the Windrush River.



Over the years it has served as a place for the Collins' family to relax, but with children grown and true-to-trend in the area, Temple Guiting Manor has been reincarnated as a *ne plus ultra* weekend retreat to accommodate up to 10 guests. It is built of the local, honey-yellow Cotswold limestone and framed in Tudor style with dark, rough-hewn beams and joists that are older than most anything stateside. There are chic minimalist bathrooms worthy of Ian Schrager, and up-to-the-moment furnishings — a mix of French chandeliers, African masks, Tudor (not ersatz, but the real deal) chests, and carved Jacobean dining chairs from the John Paul Getty Estate. There's also a sleek kitchen — let's face it, primarily for poaching an egg or two for breakfast by guests who are making do for the weekend without Cook. The uncluttered interiors allow the ancient patinas of flagstones and oak beams to speak for themselves.

The landscape, too, has all the intricate Elizabethan geometry and profuse flower borders envisaged by the client, but like the house interior, it is organized around an austere structure. These exquisite gardens are the work of Jinny Blom, an old friend of Steven Collins and energetic psychologist-turned-garden-designer who arrived on the scene shortly after Collins bought the property. "We have fun together," he says. Fun for him, maybe, but for Blom, the job represented a stepping back in time on a scale that was almost daunting to the award-winning designer. "The site was completely dilapidated — and the garden was clogged with laurel, conifers and terrible Leyland cypress hedges," she recalls. "Walls were falling down. The river had silted up."

Blom's aim was to regroup the various elements of the landscape into a harmonious whole. "I wanted to make a setting for the house and give it back an anchor. The landscape was conceived as a pleasure garden for the client's family, the challenge being to create intimate spaces out of a vast area of 14.5 acres," she says. To ensure that the whole environment — house and garden — was coordinated from the start, she collaborated with architect Ptolemy Dean, an internationally known historic preservationist and BBC presenter. Not that Blom lacks confidence in her own judgment. "I have impeccable taste," she says with a half-smile, ready to poke fun at herself. Blom is, however, an ambitious and determined designer, and mindful that with an important site such as this and a committed client came the singular opportunity to create something extraordinary. "My design approach is always to build it properly and get the bones right," she says. "Then no one can wreck it."

Today, several years down the line, she has incorporated contemporary client requirements into a plan based on historic research and intensive study of the site, like the AstroTurf tennis court, for example. All around it in naturalistic order, Blom put topiary spheres and cones, which are playfully conceived as characters, courtside spectators (who nevah, evah boo). They also serve as handy loose-ball catchers, and are often found yellow-polka-dotted with missed serves and bobbled volleys. The property manager's black Labrador, Gilbey, has taught himself to fetch these out with his teeth, to gather up with his mistress in the same willow trug she uses in the cutting garden. Study of 18th-century plans revealed that an old track had once bisected the property. Blom reinstated this line in the form of the Granary Walk, a long promenade between lavish borders backed by high walls of Cotswold stone. It restored a sense of compartmentalization around the house and became a signature of the project.

Blom describes her style as contemporary Arts and Crafts, and believes in the principle of materials appropriate to the place. Indeed, her now-famous dry-laid stone walls throughout the garden subsequently won an award from the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain. Which sounds dry indeed, in more ways than one. Except that the award netted a visit by the organic farmer and Royal preservationist himself, from just down the road. Prince Charles, all natty in a pale gray checked suit, paid an official visit to deliver the award himself. He held court with 70 children from the village school, fidgeting with United Kingdom flags; he strolled the Granary Walk with earnest care to admire the walls; he stayed for tea — Earl Grey served with Temple Guiting's own honey, lavender cookies and chocolate éclairs.

FYI: ◻ In November 2008, Jinny Blom will be featured in The Royal Oak Foundation's annual garden lecture series, Seeds for Thought, in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Call 212-480-2889, ext 201, or see royal-oak.org. ◻ For Jinny Blom info see jinnyblom.co.uk. ◻ For National Gardens Scheme open garden days see ngs .org.uk. ◻ To stay at Temple Guiting Manor see templeguitingmanor.co.uk.





Opposite: A bench provides a place to enjoy the view across the valley to the quiet Cotswolds countryside. Above: The shell pink rose Winchester Cathedral® has the old-fashioned look that suits the rural English surroundings. Below: The Long Water, the garden's most formal and theatrical element, occupies the middle terrace, and is the client's favorite part of the garden.

The garden's top terrace contains a bucolic orchard of pears, cherries, apples and plums; the central terrace is a grand set piece where the long water is set on an axis with the 17th-century dovecotes at one end of the house; clipped hornbeam and borders of silver and white flank the rectangular pool. Finally, on the lowest level, a series of five smaller gardens, each very different in character, include compartments of roses, herbs, a green garden of topiary yew, a boxwood parterre and a dining area near the old stone privy. At river level, the Peacock Garden has a naturalistic meadow quality, billowing with wildflowers. It doubles as a seasonal sheep's pasture.

And there, to bring our story full circle, in the springtime lambing season, guests delight in watching our wooly friends graze, a centuries-old scene of British arcadian contentment at its best. A neighbor's flock of 150 performs free-range mowing and fertilizing service to that naturalistic meadow. They are kept at bay — make that bleat — from the fancier gardens by what Brits amusingly call a "ha-ha." Which is, essentially, a dry moat on the far side of those award-winning walls, meant to give the sheep a rude tumble down (hence, the ha-ha) should they be temped to intrude — preserving both the gardens and the view.

There's an ancient alchemy at work here — five people on a weekend can enjoy the garden as easily as 150 people there to see the Prince. And, as the Temple Guiting Manor visitors' book attests, they all have. Blom's medals from the Chelsea Flower Show make a great calling card for clients. But more important, she reckons that her former life as a psychologist is the key to her success: "I observe what makes people feel uplifted and happy — and gardens are extraordinary for that. They have an astonishing effect."







the rock collector

From her Sonoma wine country home, the ebullient Wendy Owen scans the horizon and thinks big thoughts — with a French accent

BY TIMOTHY JACK WARD PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON



IF YOU THINK YOU'RE IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE, THE RESEMBLANCE IS INtentional. The Sonoma hillside home and fieldstone-paved garden of award-winning interior designer Wendy Owen smells powdery sweet with lavender and commands a view of George Ranch Vineyards in the valley below. Her property is designed to recall Provence, where Owen and her husband John Isbrandtsen travel several times each year to collect architectural salvage and antiques.

The terraced family compound Owen shares with her husband and teenage son consists of five buildings, so far, and is furnished and trimmed with massively scaled stone relics, tree stumps, boards 20 feet long and six inches thick, and architectural remnants that required forklifts to put in place. Owen's garden plantings are in bold strokes, too: She has blanketed her hillside property with 'Provence' lavender—1,000 plants in just the past two years. It thrives in the conditions and climate that she says mirrors that of Provence.

After years of renovating houses, the couple has acquired the ability to recognize a diamond in the rough. Their Sonoma house was derelict when they bought it and, frighteningly, inhabited by a posse of raccoons



Boston ivy makes a bower of Wendy Owen's bedroom terrace. "A real fountain, not a trickle," says Owen, who built hers of plastered cinder blocks, fitted with meter-long scuppers salvaged in France. More torrential than tinkling, the fountain creates an auditory privacy zone. Oversize lounge chair by Ron Mann. Previous pages, left: Recycled mesquite and mahogany doors, with terra-cotta roof tiles selected for their patina; right: Lavender grows copiously, redolent of Provence.

— and worse. After finding more suitable lodgings for the animal life, Owen began to transform the property. She renovated the structures and extended the landscape with fieldstone terraces, parterres and walls — nearly 8,000 square feet of flooring alone. The garden today includes no less than 10 outdoor rooms, furnished with pieces of her own design or invention, and others by her mentor and neighbor Ron Mann.

And where'd she get all those rocks? The answer also explains the architectural style that inspires Owen's work. In the rocky terrain of Provence, when land is cleared to provide soil footing sufficient for vineyards, there is an enormous yield of fieldstone with which to build. Similarly, the nearly unlimited supply of Sonoma fieldstone that Owen hauls up from the vineyards in her valley has gone to hardscaping, big time.

Owen's attention to patina and detail led to painstaking acts such as relocating the lichen-covered Mexican roof tiles from the scrub-oak-shaded back of the house to the front, where she could more easily see and enjoy them. Owen delights in the details: The authentic roof tiles are irregular, she reports, formed by shaping clay over newspaper and around the worker's thigh, resulting in a random proportion and offset-printed surprise.



Pull up a stump: a 12-foot-long table in the dining pavilion, lighted with epoxy-stiffened paper chandeliers that recall petticoats, the scene of family holidays and entertaining. Right: A potting shed mimics a Provençal farmer's *cabanon* to shelter from midday sun. Owen's contains resting bulbs and three-foot-tall hemp flour sacks plump-full of lavender for sachets.



"Provence is our shared passion," says Owen, who met John Isbrandtsen in 1992 at a gym in Fairfield, Connecticut. Among other things the two had in common were identical green Toyota 4Runners, the trucklike, late-'80s model favored by surfers. Owen took this as a good sign. On their second date, a weekend trip by ferry to Block Island (a craggy, authentically spare resort island favored by East Coast folk who eschew the Hamptons), she discovered he was also willing to help out with one of her hobbies, rock collecting. Which was lucky, because we're not talking about a pocketful of pebbles from the beach. Instead, Owen likes her souvenirs very, very large indeed. So love and adventure were in the air when Isbrandtsen, an investment banker, gamely helped her haul specimen boulders back to the mainland in the back of the Toyota, springs groaning on the choppy ferry ride. It would be the first of a lifetime of scavenger hunts, chunk-style.

Owen, 52, is an effervescent expat who first designed and sold flower arrangements at age 14 in Hammonds Nursery in Stobbington, England, and later went to Vancouver, then Bronxville, New York, to work as an au pair. In the Westchester County suburbs of Manhattan, she



soon found interior design work, sewing up draperies and installing upholstered walls, a fashionable look in the '80s. She rented a modest beach cottage in Fairfield, Connecticut, and began work as a "stager"—temporarily redecorating posh houses for sale.

Then with Isbrandtsen's business acumen, the two made it their profession and investment together, leveraging to live affordably in the homes they prepared speculatively for market. They married in Fiji, and in 1999 moved west to restore a waterfront property near Sausalito, California. Wendy Owen's interior design style has evolved to a relaxed look that is rustic but minimal, putty grey and sun-bleached, with over-scale proportions. Giorgio Armani meets Fred Flintstone.

There was a plan, perhaps only in her head, and the property has continued to evolve. A thundering fountain fitted with meter-long antique limestone scuppers was sited to be viewed through French doors in the bedrooms. A 30-foot-by-18-foot, 12-foot-high outdoor dining room accommodates Valentine's Day soirees, photo shoots for Smith & Hawken and fundraising dinners. A doghouse for the family's retriever Olive (whose hamming has made him a star of several catalog

On a fieldstone-paved terrace, a seating area with a vineyard valley view. The designer annually paints her hemp upholstery with her favorite chartreuse and allows it to fade and weather with the wood. That's Olive hamming. Opposite: "O" is for over-scaled, among other things. For a graphic identity, Owen up-turned a limestone well cap.



shoots) is in the works. And a once-shabby studio is now a 1,200-square-foot, four-room guesthouse of limestone stucco with a tiled roof.

Huge rings several hundred years old and carved from single hunks of limestone, four or five feet in diameter, are one of Owen's favorite French quarries of late, and she's collected eight of them in Aix-en-Provence environs for clients, and for her own home. They are well caps, the part that once protruded above ground. At Chez Owen, one stands on its side like a monolithic garden sculpture to demark the path to the outdoor dining room, and it's also a typographical joke (hint: her last name). Recalling the construction of the pyramids, a team of men inched and rolled the giant "O" into position on a rock wall. Owen confides that she has developed a friend-of-friend network of French consolidators and shippers to haul the mother lode out of the motherland.

Owen accessorizes her signature palette of earthy, putty hues with a zingy pop of accent color. "Paint the colors of the garden," she says. Using natural hemp cloth for outdoor upholstery, she decorates pillow covers and the like with chartreuse or tangerine French water-based paint. When the paints dry, she puts the fabric through the washer to



Wendy Owen pruned a stand of redwoods high to create a canopy and a view. Limestone table is 12 feet long and olive millstone has a 54-inch diameter. Opposite: Shaded by scrub oaks and dwarfed by her furniture, Wendy Owen prepares for guests at a table made of sawmill salvage. Chairs by Murray's Iron Works and stump bench have fitted cushions covered in hemp.

soften, then leaves it to the elements for the season. Indoors and out, she prefers the texture and color of raw plaster walls, and often trowels on Archistone, an outdoor-suitable limestone-based product.

For chairs, Owen favors nothing less, or more, than a lovely log. She salvages her stumps from fallen trees, ages the wood until it looks weathered, then seals it from pests and places the stumps around the table where the rest of us might opt for something a bit more, well, portable. And each of her tabletops comes with a story. The details of shipping the designer's *objets trouvés* astound the imagination: a 17-foot redwood slab that has moved with the family from the West to East Coast and back again; an enormous piece of Burgundy limestone that was once a bullnose-edged threshold in an ancient castle; 20-foot-long, six-inch-thick boards from a lumber mill in upstate New York.

And so Wendy Owen has brought her passion for the south of France — and her singular, bulk-scale approach to collecting — to the hills of Sonoma. There she is recreating the expansive and relaxed style of outdoor living she adores, while developing her award-winning and sought-after design practice in "America's Provence."







GREEN AND GOLDEN

ON CONNECTICUT'S MAYWOOD ESTATE, SIXTEEN GARDENS MINGLE — WITH GLAMOUR AND SOUL

BY TIMOTHY JACK WARD PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD FELBER



A bird's-eye view of the gardens from Maywood's loggia house terrace. At lower left is the formal herbaceous garden, with crisp panels of 'Powis Castle' artemisia and salvia framed by dwarf boxwood. A stone pergola overlooks the greenhouse and farms, visible in the distance. Opposite: Marble ornament seen through a stone oculus.



The loggia house, clad with Victorian-inspired lattice, viewed from perennial gardens planted with coleus, phlox and white Asiatic lilies. Tall, arched windows are designed to retract into the stone podium, creating an open-air great room. Behind it, a brick carriage house provides guest quarters.



W

WHAT BETTER WAY TO PROTECT A RURAL CHARACTER AND PANORAMIC VIEW THAN TO ACQUIRE sufficient acreage to do so. At Maywood Estate in Litchfield County, Connecticut, that was one of the long-term goals. It is astonishing to learn that in 1974 the original family property featured on these pages was a modest hilltop cottage on 11 acres of scruffy woodlands. The project has become an enduring, decades-long labor of love, a property of epic proportion and value. Through the years, nearly 1,000 acres of adjacent farm and forest have been acquired, with the aim of preserving the view to the west of rolling hills and a river valley of historic significance to the region.

Gradually, a formal compound of house and garden has grown on a scale that would eclipse some public spaces. The Maywood property today includes at least 16 distinct gardens, from the neoclassical and formally ordered gardens closest to the manor house, to white, woodland, heather and kitchen gardens. The centerpiece gardens on the manor-house grounds are laid out in a tight and tidy order, and from there the landscape unfolds in a succession of wilder plantings. In addition, there are working gardens that actually supply the property with new plants, decorative features, cut flowers in abundance and enough produce to stock a general store — quite literally.

The original cottage is memorialized in a framed print in the offices of Gregory Bollard, the property manager at Maywood, which are situated in a restored dairy barn that now anchors the estate operations and working farm in the valley, below the main house and gardens. The cottage was the kind of lake property commonly found in this neck of the woods — in no way sophisticated, but a lovely place for family to hang out on weekends.

That humble house is long gone and has been replaced by a neoclassic Georgian-style manor, designed by Mark Ferguson of Ferguson & Shamamian Architects in New York. Ferguson's meticulous attention to classical detail is very apparent — in a stroll around the house, for example, the historically accurate, handmade bricks in four subtly different colors add visual interest to the facade.

A Victorian "loggia" was added in 2001 adjacent to the manor house. It is the architectural center of the gardens, a one-room trellised folly with a clerestory cap, and walls punctuated by tall arched windows. It is a grand indoor/outdoor family room that overlooks a sunken perennial garden. With a rectilinear English-style layout, it leads to a charming diagonal-plan parterre that grids up to reference the loggia, and recalls its latticework. The loggia rests on a stone podium and terrace and in warm weather its 10-foot-tall windows can retract into the base. Year round, the interior walls are covered with delicate creeping fig, an inverted *trompe l'oeil* that provokes a double-take. The room is furnished with lush, thickly upholstered lounge furniture and has plenty of room to sprawl. By means of the retractable windows, the loggia is a year-round amenity, cozy in the winter and al fresco in warm weather. From the loggia, the view of the formal gardens, golf greens, the farm and greenhouse below, and the wider landscape beyond, is gorgeous.

The property is situated on a peninsula that is framed by the Housatonic River,



Brick-floored pool cabana, festooned with wisteria, ivy and grape vines. Country Casual chairs surround glass-top dining table, custom-made from an early 19th-century cast-iron fence. Opposite: The charcoal gray gunite pool is designed to reflect the landscape; water gardens are planted with lotus and water lilies.







and was once the hunting ground of fur trappers and Native American clans. It is also land that was stripped of its trees in the 19th century when forestry management as we now know it was not in the public consciousness. And so it is all the more significant that at the heart of Maywood is a genuine eco-sensitive ethos. In a remarkable turnaround, Maywood was the first property in Connecticut to achieve forest management certification through the Rainforest Alliance's SmartWood program. Neighboring properties have followed suit, keeping up with the Joneses in a good way. Bollard, who ran a small retail garden center when he was hired 26 years ago and now manages the estate's horticulture team of 12, says that "good stewardship" is at the core of the Maywood operation. He is also certified by the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA), and the estate has also been certified by Audubon International.

A visit to Maywood conveys an impression of stewardship and optimism. For those who wish to visit, the gardens at Maywood are briefly opened to the public for tours, offered through the Garden Conservancy (see gardenconservancy.org) — which would be better described as hikes, or treks, given the scope. But as Maywood is a private residence and a working farm, the privacy of the family and friends who gather there is vigilantly protected during the remainder of the year.

The grand-scale project required that 55,000 cubic yards of topsoil were hauled back up the hillsides — thousands of truckloads — to reshape the property and create the gently rolling contours the owner envisioned. A dream team of garden designers, including Deborah Nevins, Nancy McCabe and Peter Cummin, would ennoble the property through the years. One of the goals was to create a sense of space and openness, consistent with the existing topography. And then some. The land was terraced — on the scale of acres, not feet. As the estate was developed, with structures and venues added, the aim was to echo the strength of the scenery further afield, the rolling New England hills.



THE AIM WAS TO PROTECT THE VIEW OF THE ROLLING HILLS AND A RIVER VALLEY OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE TO THE REGION

From the manor house terrace, Maywood Estate's 1,000-acre view to the west. In the foreground, a flourishing perennial garden with sundial centerpiece and stone pergola beyond. Opposite: Framed by Shasta daisies and trumpet vine, the stone pergola's brick floor is mortared on-edge in a herringbone pattern.





Visitors find an eccentric array of sculpture and decorations in Maywood gardens, often casually placed. Here: A 20-inch-high terra-cotta horse's head rests on a stone pier. Opposite: Amid Russian sage, honeysuckle and lantana Confetti™ and 'Lemon Drop', a three-foot-tall cone and an artichoke, both carved out of marble.

IF MAYWOOD LEAVES A VISITOR WITH A MESSAGE, IT IS OF A GLOBALLY AWARE AND LOCALLY FOCUSED LOVE FOR THE LAND



Stunning 4,000-square-foot greenhouse, built of aluminum and glass in 1995 by Frank Jonkman and Sons. Farm pond is bordered with miscanthus and daylilies. Opposite: Near a perennials cutting garden presides a 250-year-old white oak.





A soaring 4,000-square-foot greenhouse was completed and now is integral to the vast estate operation. Bollard says his staff grows more than 60 percent of the plants at Maywood from seed. While there are lovely cutting gardens arranged by color and texture, there is also a "working cutting garden" that supplies weekly floral arrangements in season. During an early spring visit before the last freeze, in one workshop several hundred large terra-cotta containers awaited planting and placement.

When the owner saw the nearby general store foundering, he bought it. It is now stocked seasonally with Maywood's own farm-stand fare including forced bulbs, corn, honey, apples, berries, pumpkins and maple syrup. Bollard, who uses organic practices with some pragmatic compromises, sited two vineyards for optimal drainage and sun exposure and cleverly added a pair of spirited if not hyperactive border collies who shoo turkeys and deer 24/7. The first taste test of their eggs makes any skeptic glad of the decision to raise chickens. Like many properties in the area, a small-batch local wine enthusiasm has taken hold at Maywood. Two vintages of cabernet franc and chardonnay are already drinkable. While not yet commercially available, the Maywood label wine is stocked and shared privately with friends.

The desire to be pragmatically green is apparent at Maywood. When fertilizer-intensive areas were added, the manicured lawns were also offset with more orchards, where the fruit is grown organically. With 1,000 acres to work with, the property manager can give and take, tweaking the property on a grand scale.

And so the Maywood Estate is indeed lush and astounding, perhaps itself marking a renaissance of the Great American garden. And, by progressive methods and a spirit of innovation, the substance of the property reaches beyond its undeniably neoclassical aesthetic. If Maywood leaves a visitor with a message, it is of a globally aware and locally focused love for the land — and a singular, expansive vision for the future.

PAST PRESENT

At an estate garden-turned-park, heirloom plants are the key to reclaiming the groundbreaking design and recapturing the romance of the original landscape

BY TOVAH MARTIN PHOTOGRAPHY BY STACY BASS





It was in the Italianate garden at what is now the Harkness Memorial State Park that Beatrix Jones Farrand hit her stride, layering beds of blossoms and foliage that banter color echoes back and forth. In the garden's pond, cattails surround "Duck Baby," as the statue has been dubbed.





Stroll up to the Harkness mansion to wander among the billowing,

blossom-dense gardens that lap at its foundation, and experience the timeless quality of its brilliant blue delphiniums, crisp white daisies and intoxicatingly perfumed heliotropes. This effect is not by chance. The goal of recent renovations was to re-create the gardens just as they were in their heyday. Originally designed by Beatrix Jones Farrand in the early part of the 20th century, the Waterford, Connecticut, garden was among the finest of its time. But its lush and lovely condition today belies the derelict state this significant landscape had fallen into when plans were initiated in 1988 to restore the gardens. The goal here was not only to bring it back to life, but to do so using the species and cultivars chosen by Farrand herself, true heirlooms rather than modern-day stand-ins. And Farrand absolutely played favorites when selecting her plant palette: Each had a particular role to play. To capture the original vision, the plant-selecting process was scrupulous. The result is a garden that is both frozen in time yet vibrant, filled with plants — lilies, nigella, sea holly, marigolds, althea, delphiniums, calendula, clematis — that suit the site, the time and each other.

Hired by Edward and Mary Harkness to create gardens to complement their neoclassical mansion set on 230 sumptuous seaside acres, Farrand was already among the finest landscape designers in the country. She was the only woman among the 11 founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and she had a rich and famous client list (she is best known for Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C.). When she came to Eolia, as the Harkness estate was known, she was faced with a blank canvas accented with stately trees.

Farrand went to work in 1918 creating an "Oriental" garden, a fitting context for the statuary that the Harknesses had acquired in the East. (With no extant planting plans by Farrand, a 1940s revamp by landscape architect Marian Cruger Coffin is what the garden shows today.) Farrand balanced this garden with a not-too-formal Italianate one, started about 1922, filled with plants masterfully selected to



Above: Close to the Harkness mansion a rich mix of shrubs, vines, perennials and annuals are arranged in a lush but orderly fashion, then leave formality behind as the gardens get further away from the house. Heirloom notables include five- to six-foot-tall downy sunflower, *Helianthus mollis* (left) and a dark version of the compact tickseed, *Coreopsis tinctoria* 'Nana' (right).



echo colors, forms and textures. Working to achieve a composition with an eight-foot maximum height, Farrand faced the challenge of finding plants that possessed a graceful silhouette and would knit together with their bedfellows. *Verbascum olympicum* was just the ticket. Standing seven to eight feet tall, with primrose-yellow candelabras of flowers, this mullein provides a seduction from the far side of the wall. Other statuesque beauties include white and burgundy hollyhocks, plume poppy, helianthus and seven-foot-tall *Hemerocallis thunbergii*, a fragrant daylily with lemon-yellow blooms. The lush layering continues to step down with midsize dahlias, coreopsis, sea holly, crocosmia and veronica, then shorter plants like lamb's ear, allysum and nasturtium. A visual tapestry sating each of the senses, the Italianate garden was a triumph, and it became one of the benchmark examples of her style.

Treasured for its majesty, Eolia endured for many years — even after Mary Harkness' death in 1950 when it was bequeathed to the state. But even the greatest garden can slip away. Though the landscape never lost its original hardscape skeleton, by the late 1980s — due to a lack of funds, a shortage of skilled labor and finally Hurricane Gloria in 1985 — Eolia was in sad shape, and little remained of the plantings. A long struggle to win funds from the state succeeded, and the process of restoring the gardens began.



But even before Eric Hansen, head gardener for the Italianate garden, started his plant shopping, he realized that a carpet of modern, nonstop bedding blossoms would never express Beatrix Jones Farrand's intention or genius. So he embarked on an exhaustive search, scouring the Internet for sources throughout the world, securing the precise plants that were stipulated by Farrand, with no substitutions. Along the way, those involved in the restoration discovered that heirlooms — defined as plants dating back 50 years or longer — possess unique characteristics related to size and scale, color and scent. Period gardens into the early 20th century were loose and informal compared with our cropped counterparts and compact plants — a fairly new phenomenon, owing much to a need for easy long-distance shipping and the popularity of container gardening. The goal of a garden then was to surround you with flora rather than lay a carpet at your feet.

Above: A perfect setting for statuary, the Oriental garden moves with billowing masses of plants like daisies and *Anthemis tinctoria* 'Moonlight'. One of Farrand's approaches was to make wildflowers and cultivated plants comfortable bedfellows. *Oenothera glazioviana*, the large-flowered evening primrose (left), gives the Italianate garden a woodland nonchalance, offsetting the grandeur of flowers like *Lilium* 'White Henryi' (right).










Through the years, breeders have also striven for denser, larger flower heads, with more blossoms held in tight clusters and in often blaring palettes. Compare those with the loose, airy blooms in soft muted colors of heirlooms. One of Farrand's favorites was delphinium, then looking more like its cousin, larkspur. At Harkness, the aquamarine Belladonna delphinium and its periwinkle-blue kin *Delphinium* x *bellamosum* form loose spires, as opposed to the bright, flower-packed delphiniums that now suffuse the trade. Farrand's versions of marigolds and snapdragons are also taller, with smaller, less-dense blooms. And heirlooms have more foliage in relation to flowers. Played out at Harkness, the sheer volume does the double duty of framing vistas, while also giving the garden motion — everything dances in the sea breezes.

"There's a softer feeling to heirloom gardens, like seeing the scene through a gauzy lens," says Eileen Grant, former president of the Friends of Harkness and head of the horticulture committee. "The garden has a subtlety that blends with the landscape. It's not as intrusive as modern counterparts." Another heirloom characteristic is fragrance, which in newer plants is nearly a lost cause. If the currently popular 'Princess Marina' heliotrope had been planted, the gardens would be bereft of the achingly romantic perfume of the heirloom version, a combination of baby powder, vanilla and apple cider. And then there's the fleetingly fragrant mignonette, a favorite of the Empress Josephine, now rarely seen in gardens. Basking in the sun, filled with roses, scented geraniums, lemon verbena, tuberose and signet marigold, the gardens at Harkness have a heady aroma.



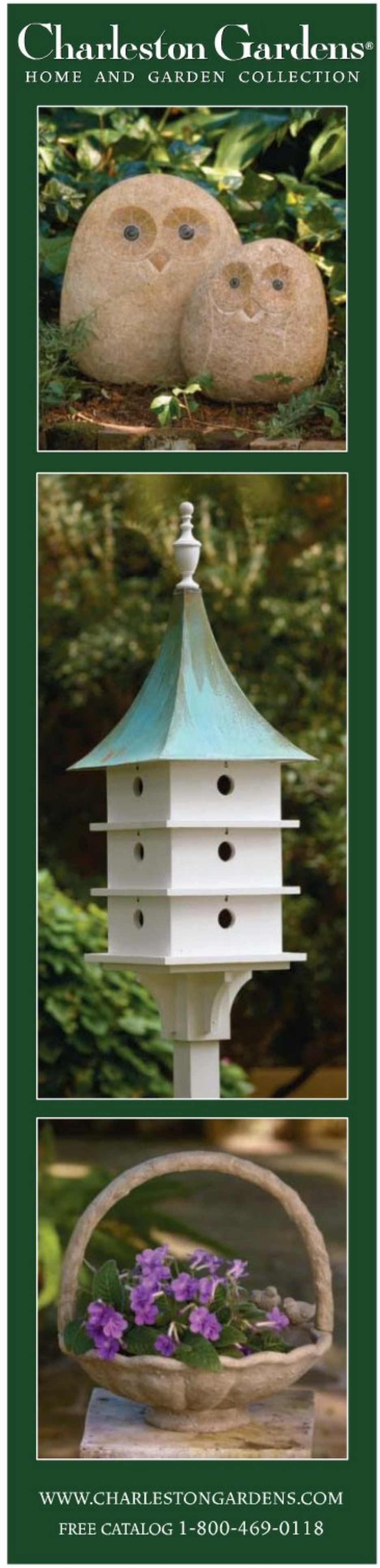
After years of weaving the tapestry that Farrand envisioned, the gardeners at Harkness have enjoyed design epiphanies as well. Surveying his work one day, Hansen noticed the subtle innuendos of yellow bouncing back and forth between black-eyed Susans and calendulas. The same awe for Farrand's genius struck him when he noticed how drifts of white *Filipendula vulgaris* led his eye up to the dappled white clusters of climbing hydrangea on a distant wall.

For the Harkness team, there is no going back. In its own way, Harkness Memorial State Park is steward to a moment in garden design history that could have slipped away. What has been re-created there will never again be bygone.

Above: Heady-scented heliotrope found use as standards and in parterres. Heirlooms in a cool-color range include (clockwise from top left) *Echinops ritro*, enlisted for its structural, thistlelike orbs; the signature Harkness heliotrope; *Salvia farinacea*, the ideal consort for daylilies and white foxgloves; ocean-echoing, aquamarine Belladonna delphinium; and (far right) sea holly, *Eryngium planum*.


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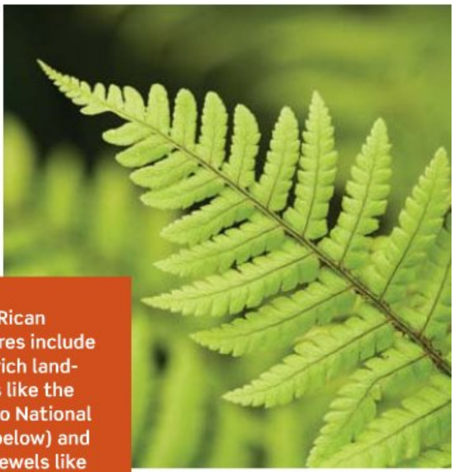

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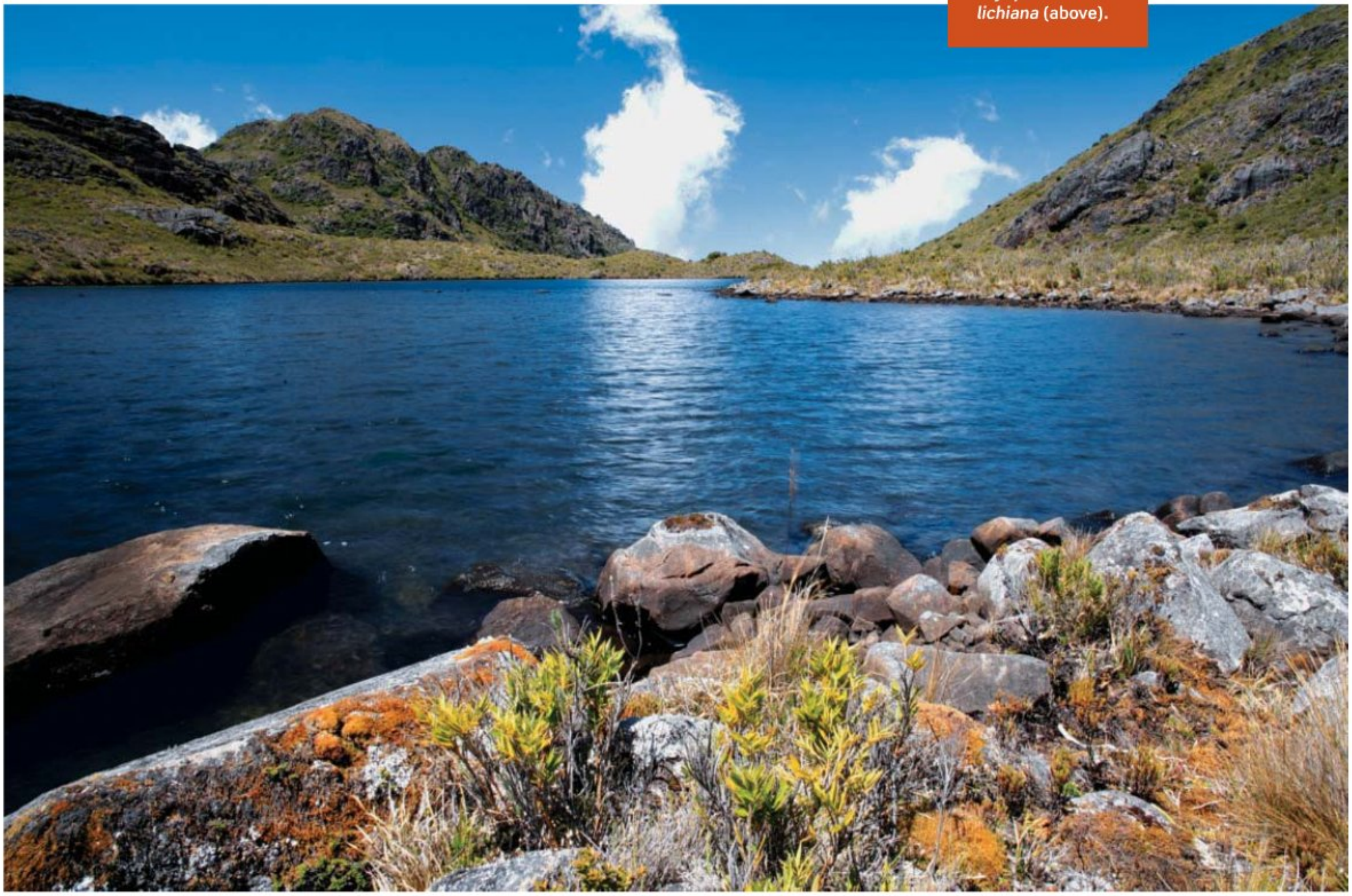
Pura Vida

FOR A COUNTRY ROUGHLY THE SIZE OF VERMONT and New Hampshire combined, Costa Rica offers a staggering diversity of habitats, from the dry lowland forests of the Pacific Coast to sultry Caribbean jungles howling with monkeys and awash with sloths. Often bypassed by the plunk-it-on-the-beach tourist, however, is the "páramo" ecosystem, composed of glacier-formed valleys and plains filled with lakes, bogs, grasslands, shrublands and cloud forests. Found at high elevations in the neotropics, this botanical fantasia portrays in stunning fashion the collision of North American flora with that of its Austral Antarctic counterpart. Many plants in this area would not seem unusual to visitors from 3,500 miles south or north, the high spine of the Andes providing vegetal access across Central America, extending all the way to Patagonia. Squaring off on this narrow bridge of land that connects the two continents is a titillating array of genera that gardeners from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Punta Arenas, Chile, might find familiar.

Though the Chirripó National Park, with its extremely high altitudes — some 12,530 feet above sea level — does not lend itself to easy access, a high pass through the Talamanca Mountains south of San



Costa Rican treasures include plant-rich landscapes like the Chirripo National Park (below) and living jewels like *Dryopteris wallichiana* (above).



TOP TO BOTTOM: CLIVE NICHOLS, ADRIAN HEPWORTH/NHPA

José on the Pan-American Highway makes the páramo available for the botanically adventurous. It was to this pass that I recently traveled, setting up "camp" in the charming settlement of San Gerardo de Rivas at over 4,000 feet. Even at this elevation, our sea-level lungs are belied by any quick exertion, and frost is found near our accommodations in early morning.

While a beguilingly beautiful landscape, the Costa Rican páramo is not the Four Seasons. Just brief sun exposure at this latitude and altitude, despite dense clouds from late morning through late afternoon, will burn the skin. Strong chapping winds appear by noon, bringing walls of dense, cold fog. The skies clear by sunset, and temperatures can dip well below freezing. For icing on the cake, the vegetation is rife with "highland chiggers." Despite precautions, I will return home once again with welts across the most highly regarded and secured territories of my anatomy from the bites of this devilish arachnid.

The cloud forests with their daily bathing of foggy drizzle are rich and colorful, as expected, but possess some surreal visions. Glowing butterscotch-yellow, 15-inch flower heads are carried on the 20-foot aster relative *Senecio multinervis*. In boggy areas grows a spectacular tree fern, *Blechnum buchtienii*, with leathery fronds to three feet atop trunks to six feet. Amongst this fern grows a startling bromeliad with silvery foliage and flowering stems to 10 feet. I collected and germinated seed of this species, *Puya dasyliriodes*, in 2004 and have been delighted with its hardiness, braving temperatures as low as 20 degrees F in my garden at Windcliff in Washington.

Adjacent to streams grow two species of the gigantic foliaged "rhubarbs." *Gunnera telamancana* has rough, deeply lobed leaves to 10 feet plus, while *G. insignis*, equally imposing, has leaves less lobed and smoother, held by red petioles. Amidst the gunneras grow such well-known genera as *Smilacina* or false Solomon's seal, represented by two species in North America. The Costa Rican species, *Smilacina gigantea* (or as recent taxonomic treatment suggests, *Maianthemum gigas*) takes on different proportions, giving credence to its specific epithet. It clambers through the dense understory of the cloud forest, rising through supporting vegetation to a staggering 25 feet. It is intriguing to think of hybridizing this and other Central American species with their North American counterparts.

Of course, the genus *Fuchsia* is well-known, and one need not venture far into the highlands of Costa Rica to encounter it in its raw form. *Fuchsia splendens* lives up to its name, with enormous panicles of pendulous coral-red flowers that are pollinated by hummingbirds, as are most American *Fuchsia* species. Interestingly, the fruit is sausage-shaped and leathery, rather than the succulent berries usually associated with the genus. *Fuschia splendens* makes a splendid container plant or can be sited in the ground for the summer months; it is hardy only in Zone 9 and above.

Viburnum is perhaps the last genus one would conjure forth in dreams of the neotropics, however it is here and in great numbers. I find *Viburnum venustum* to be a very handsome species, with ovate, glossy deep-green foliage to six inches in length and large corymbs of white flowers. During my visit it was not in fruit, so no seed collection was possible, but cuttings sufficed. So, too, cuttings of *Hydrangea peruviana* translated nicely to the cutting

bench upon my arrival home. All members of this genus of primarily shrubs morph to evergreen vines from Mexico southward to Tierra del Fuego. Two species can be found ascending to the high-rise canopy of Costa Rica, with *H. peruviana* the most handsome, its flattened corymbs of rich pink flowers held amidst deep-green foliage. It has not a prayer of hardiness in Zones 9 and less, though its potential to impart pink when bred with other climbing hydrangeas made the time expended finding this species supremely worth the effort.

Escaping notice during my first two trips here was a small evergreen shrub that I came to admire in Chile. *Desfontainea spinosa* is a handsome creature, with evergreen hollylike leaves held in pairs along stems to five feet, and a long display of candy-corn-colored tubular flowers. It seemed after first notice to appear spontaneously at every site we visited. Growing with it is a splendid small evergreen tree known as *Weinmannia trichocalyx* with a wide geographical range, finely textured, glossy leaves and spires of white flowers resulting in ruby-red seed. I have met this species in the far reaches of Chile, as well as its cousin, *W. racemosa*, in New Zealand.

At the highest elevations along the Pan-American Highway, the landscape is dominated by a large shrub in the genus *Escallonia*. With small glossy leaves held along a wedding-cakelike framework, it resembles a stunted, windswept tree. At its base grows a sublime, rarely seen fern species whose encounter could be likened to that of an avid birder capturing on film a flock of resplendent quetzals. *Jamesonia alstonia* is a small, wispy creature with little visual presence until viewed up close. Upon study, one realizes that its narrow fronds are in continuous growth, in fact unfurling nonstop until each leaf, after years of unraveling, dies. Here too, at nearly 12,000 feet in elevation, we found colonies of the fern *Dryopteris wallichiana* and the silvery-pink *Geranium costaricensis*. We have already begun hybridizing the latter, hopefully providing hardy geraniums to climates where they have thus far been denied.

Our short stay provided another glimpse of a magnificent slice of the Earth's flora and further reinforcement of the botanical language shared by so much of this planet. And like no other time before, I have fallen in love with this country, its climate and its gentle, relaxed people. *Pura vida* — pure life!



Isabelle Greene's most famous work, the recently sold Valentine garden, contains succulents and a slate "stream" flowing from the front door toward the Pacific Ocean view.

Finely Tuned

Landscape architect Isabelle Greene blends work and play

"WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO IS IMPORTANT, AND IT'S clothed in this benign thing called a garden," begins landscape architect Isabelle Greene, exploring a question about her life's work. "I'm trying to make people happy. I'm working on our internal sensing of things and playing — like a piano tune — on what's alive and childlike and deep inside people, bringing that out and making it operate."

Greene's language is markedly not the standard language of landscape design, though she has won many landscape awards and is a fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects. The word "play" figures often in her explanations of her practice. At the recently sold Valentine garden, Greene's seminal work in Montecito, California, constructed in the early 1980s, for example, she left "clues around," she says, to "play with people's perception and their imagination, and get them into the game." In the entrance court, one of those clues

MARION BRENNER

includes a *Bauhinia*: "The shrub's horizontal, orange-flowering branches play just below, and a little to one side, of the naturally very floaty, white-flowering branches of a *Bauhinia* tree," says Greene, and the tree branches play, white on white, against the strict lines of the white stucco terraces. In the courtyard by the front door, a dry stream swirls into being in raked gravel circles beneath a mayten tree, traveling under a path to an actual pond where Greene made a "spring" bubble up directly beneath a springy vine on the wall. Around the house corner, the stream, dry again now, slips around a pomegranate tree, spreads out over a plain of tan gravel and then plunges, in the form of streaming bougainvillea, over the wall to wend its way across the rice fields below. Greene's visual puns and plays are not easily enumerated by a visitor to her gardens. What one sees instead is an unavoidable beauty, accompanied by a sense of alertness and animation. "Only I know exactly what I've put there," says Greene, "but people get it. They don't know what it is, but they get it. They feel it."

When Greene started designing the Valentine garden, she was not a licensed landscape architect; her formal training was actually in botany and studio arts. Her first career was as a botanical illustrator, and she still draws and paints well. Last year, Greene's drawings appeared alongside work by Robert Irwin at the Palm Springs Art Museum. In 2005, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and the University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara, produced an exhibition of Greene's design pieces, including a landscape installation, photographs of her gardens and examples of her sketches.

Greene has been categorized as an artist/landscape architect unhindered by theories or the history of landscape design, in the manner of California landscape painters/garden designers Lockwood de Forest and Bruce Porter. It's true that she puts no stock in the intellectualization of design, but she feels only the most casual affinity to those practitioners. She is an artist, but more than that, she's a hardworking, practical philosopher. She hesitates on the word "beauty." "Such an overused word," she says, but she has no difficulty describing the experience of it: "What really thrills me are things in the landscape that run through my body, that put me in a position of physical alertness, almost

as if danger were present, like the light before a storm. The mind becomes alive and the body, too. It cancels everything I am thinking; I'm a child with no program, just giving myself to it — or it gives itself to me. In that instant, it's like a complete joining, like being inside the eternal, primeval, primordial world." Greene has made it her life's work to create this kind of beauty: She has designed more than 600 gardens to date, and crucial to her way of working is a sense of wholeness — a joining of person to place, garden to the larger landscape — and a deep commitment to the health and endurance of the earth.

Her gardens contain gifts to her clients: a welcoming eyebrow of fragrant vine over a garage door, a wet place in a bank where birds come to drink, sweeps of blue flowers to recall a heath that a client loved. Mrs. Valentine wanted a Zen garden with a mountain spring and also places to grow vegetables and flowers. Beyond creating these satisfactions, Greene seeks to stitch the garden back into the larger landscape of which it is an integral part. "I will modulate the grading so you can see out or over or through, or shorten a hill or raise a flat area or carve away a downslope so you can see something," she explains. "I'm always trying to go after the wholeness of things because it's the big joining that's so important. A square patch, a garden, isn't much unto itself. I like to see the rest, the big picture, and feel a part of it. I don't like enclosure. I don't like separation."

Greene is known as a devoted and lifelong practitioner of sustainability, though she's skeptical of the stylishness of that word. More than 25 years ago, she created water-conserving demonstration gardens as part of the renovation of La Casita, a public property in Pasadena, California, built by Myron Hunt, a contemporary of Greene's grandfather, the well-known architect Henry Mather Greene. Presently preparing the master plan for the renovation of another historic property, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Greene is pulling up the "miles of asphalt paving" and replacing it with pervious paving, catching the overspill in "naturalistic, vegetated creeklets," so that during the rainy season pollution from cars is purified before flowing into the adjacent Mission Creek. Greene served for years on local commissions overseeing coastal conservation and urban planning, and speaks of herself as a voice for land. Greene's

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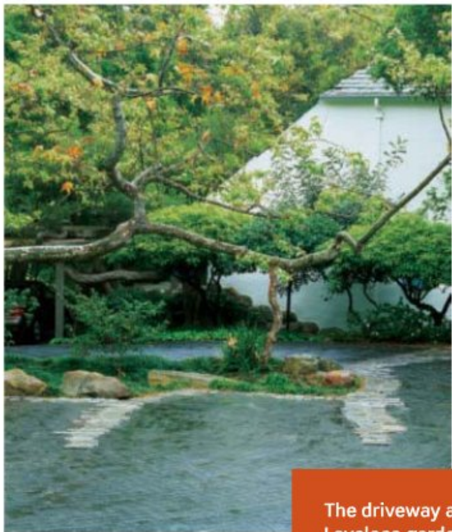
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MARION BRENNER

The driveway at the Lovelace garden was creatively reconfigured to accommodate a low-hanging branch of an old sycamore tree.

"enduring" (a word she prefers to "sustainable") gardens, particularly her botanically and aesthetically perfect sweeps of water-conserving native plantings, have influenced other landscape designers in their drive for greener gardens, but she is in no way a conscious leader of that movement. Something larger is at stake than can be served by proposing and adhering to lists of sustainability criteria, she thinks. Rather, her imaginatively rich landscapes — layers of soft blue-gray, gray-green plantings with occasional elusive fragrance; paths that take you under the arch of a tree bough in a way that makes you feel alert to its shape and to yourself; views, land shaping and rocks that connect your eyes and feet and hands appreciatively to the larger natural world — put out a unique appeal for people to love the land and to treasure it. In other words, Greene bets on beauty — the way it stirs the body and spirit, in particular — trumping ideas. She's doing what Garrett Eckbo in the late 1930s said must be done; she's putting "man and nature back together again."

Greene fears people have had to shut down their "internal sensing of things" to get on with the practical world, "but the practical world without a soul is empty, and dangerous," she says. "So I'm trying to put the soul back out there, where it can't be escaped," she concludes. And then she laughs, with typical Greene gusto, "Pretty big talk, I know." — **HAZEL WHITE**

A book about the work of Isabelle Greene is in production at Gibbs Smith, Publisher. Hazel White is the author of 11 gardening books. She calls San Francisco home.

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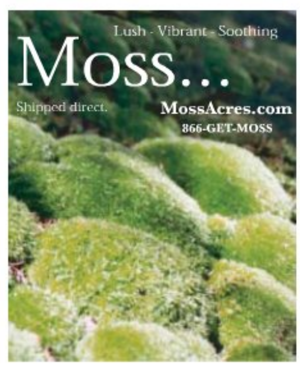
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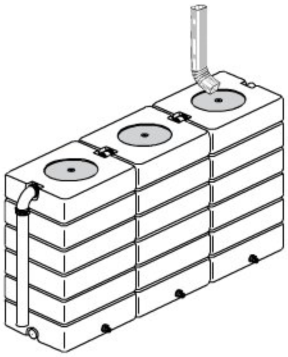


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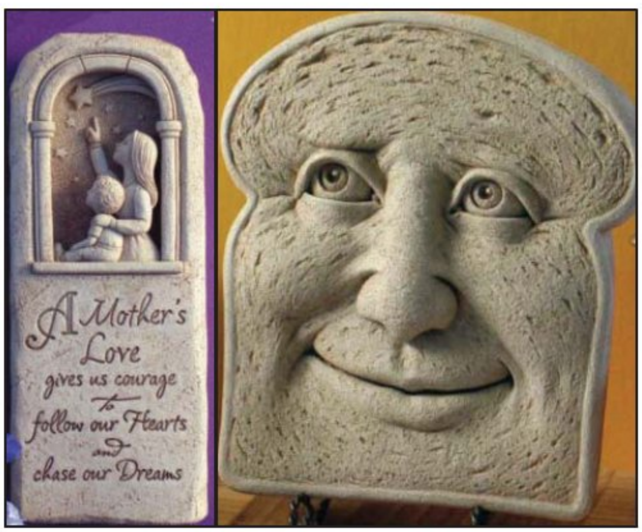
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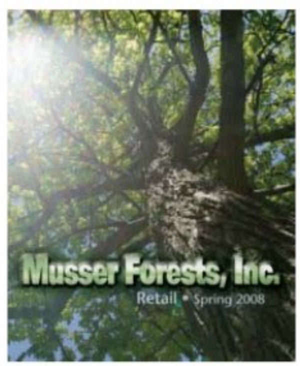
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A Line Well-Charted

MICHAEL VANDERBYL RECENTLY LAUNCHED A STUNNING COLLECTION OF neoclassical garden furniture called Azimuth for JANUS et Cie (janusetcie .com). The dean of design at California College of the Arts and a founder of the "San Francisco School" of graphic design, Vanderbyl is also a renowned designer of indoor and outdoor furnishings for Baker, Bernhardt, Bolier & Company, Teknion and many more. He and his wife Anna Hernandez, founder of Luna Textiles, designed their new Napa Valley home — and the Azimuth Collection to furnish it — and lived to tell about it. —TJW



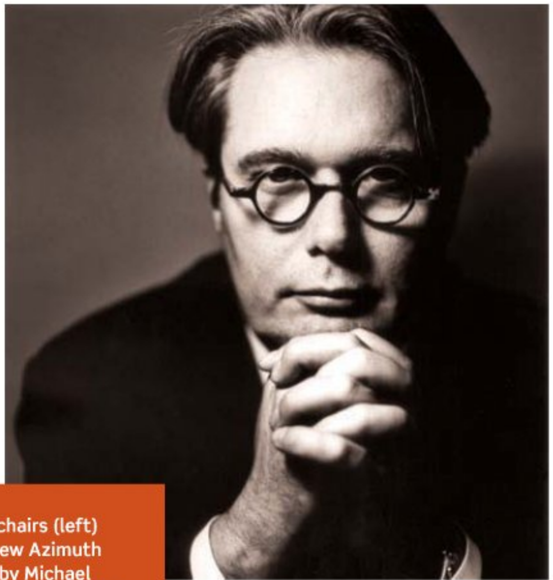
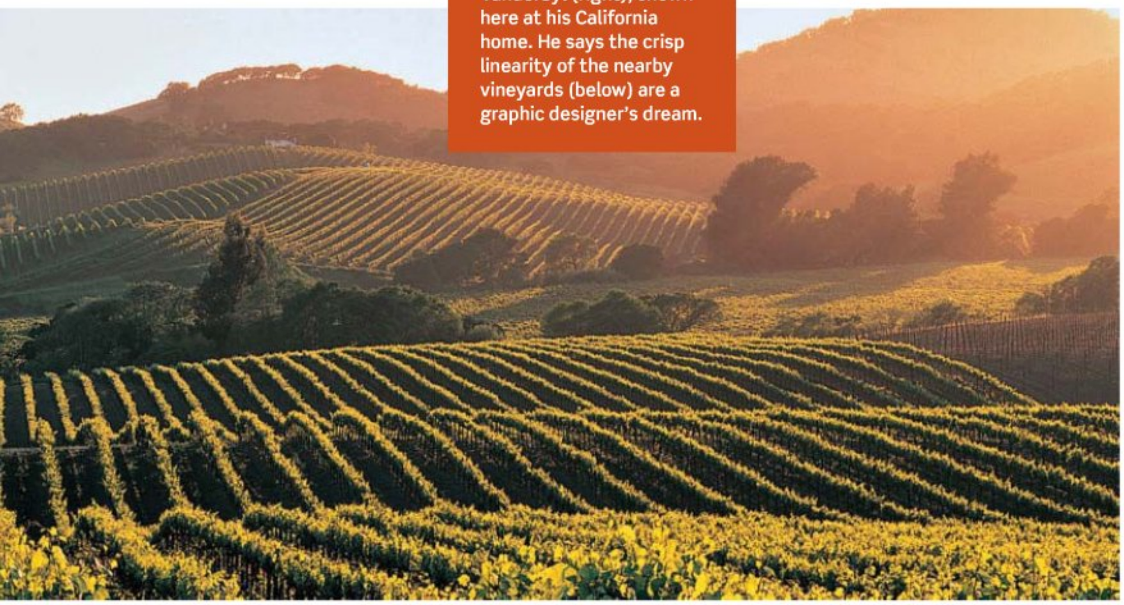


Table and chairs (left) from the new Azimuth collection by Michael Vanderbyl (right), shown here at his California home. He says the crisp linearity of the nearby vineyards (below) are a graphic designer's dream.



Q. *What's an azimuth?*
A. It's a line you use when charting a course.
Q. *Sounds nautical. You designed the graphics for the AmericaOne racing yacht, right?*
A. Yes, Vanderbyl Design did the AmericaOne identity. But this reference is military. I was once a drill sergeant in the Army!
Q. *Yessir! Well, this is about your furniture.*
A. The new collection is all about clean, straight lines. Naturally, what a graphic designer loves — furniture I could live with.
Q. *Designers are communicators. So what's your message in the Azimuth Collection?*
A. We were missing big, comfortable outdoor furniture. I wanted a modernist treatment of classical forms, to look great in very traditional or very modern gardens. But not be vanilla. I looked to Roman grilles and Le Corbusier chairs to make a fresh language. This is all about true, modern neoclassical.
Q. *And the collection is all about outdoors?*
A. Designers are recognizing the garden as an extension of our living space: the terrace, pool, cabana. It's all an extension of home.
Q. *Home design can be a marriage wrecker.*
A. Anna and I have been together for 15 years. And we're freaks of nature — when we built our St. Helena house, we had a ball!
Q. *Paint a sensory picture of the outdoors.*
A. Our "garden" is the vineyards that completely surround us, cab and zin. After harvest, the perfume is amazing — we can get drunk smelling it! And what graphic designer wouldn't like those orderly rows?
Q. *Not unlike your crisp, orderly furniture!*
A. Exactly. Our garden is something that fits like a great suit of clothing. I wanted to express that same feeling in the furniture.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JANUS ET CIE, COURTESY VANDERBYL DESIGN, DIGITALVISION/ALAMY

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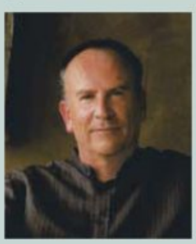
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